

THE
REVEALED WILL OF GOD,

THE
SUFFICIENT RULE OF MEN.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

VOL. I.

CHAP. I. Introduction.

CHAP. II. Of the Gospels.

CHAP. III. The Notion of the Almighty Father, his only Son, and Holy Spirit; deducible from the Scriptures.

CHAP. IV. The Notion of the original State, and present Condition of Man; deducible from the Scriptures.

*Being the promised Sequel to the Considerations on the
Theocracy, by the same Author,*

WILLIAM KNOX, Esq.

FORMERLY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE.

To us there is but one God, even the Father, of
whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ,
and we by him.

ST. PAUL.

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1801.

THE

REVEALED WILL OF GOD

THE

SUFFICIENT RULE OF FAITH

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS

Vol. I.

Chapter I. Introduction.

Chapter II. Of the Gospels.

Chapter III. The Nature of the Christian Faith, its origin, its growth, and its history.

Chapter IV. The Nature of the Christian Church, its origin, its growth, and its history.

Being the principal part of the Constitution of the
Church, as laid down in the Scriptures.

WILLIAM KNOX, Esq.
FORMERLY CHIEF CLERK OF THE
TREASURY OF THE STATE.

To the Honorable the Lords of the Council,
and the Honorable the Commons of Great Britain,
in Parliament assembled.

LONDON:

Printed by W. Smith, at the Crown and Anchor, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, near St. Dunstons Church, in the Strand.
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ERRATA.

VOL. I.

Page 3.	Line 3.	<i>dele</i> all knowledge which, <i>and read</i> what.	
— 10.	— 21.	<i>for</i> Hales <i>read</i> Hale.	
—	— 4	<i>of the note, for</i> Calvinist <i>read</i> Calvinist.	
— 12.	— 3.	<i>for</i> que'lle <i>read</i> que'lle.	
— 15.	— 8.	— Assimulated — Assimilated.	
— 19.	— 14.	— having — have.	
— 20.	— 13.	— Indispensible — Indispensable.	
— 21. note	— 11.	— Dieux — Dieu.	
— 22.	— 9.	— pursue — pursue.	
— 24.	— 24.	— Derilection — Derilection.	
— 23.	— 3.	— Militus — Melitus.	
— 34.	line last.	— Crusified — Crucified.	
— 35. note.	lines 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10,	<i>for</i> Atheneasean <i>read</i> Athanasian.	
— 36.	— 8.	— Polution — Pollution.	
—	— 17.	— Adherants — Adherents.	
— 38.	— 4.	— Right — Rite.	
— 39.	— 5.	— Pollytheism — Polytheism.	
—	— 11.	— inveloped — enveloped.	
— 45.	— 26.	— Bonnatus — Barnabus.	
— 56.	— 4.	— Derrogate — Derogate.	
— 59.	— 15.	— insinuous — injurious.	
— 74.	— 20.	— his — is	
— 75.	— 6.	<i>dele</i> and	
—	— 28.	— which — what.	
— 93.	— 5.	— Shaddac — Shaddai.	
— 96.	— 26.	<i>margin insert</i> Luke.	
— 105.	— 17.	— incontrovertable — incontrovertible.	
— 113.	— 6 & 10.	exultation — exaltation.	
— 114.	— 19.	— sentiments — resentments	
— 122.	— 8.	— for — from.	
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— 137.	— 5.	— particular — piacular.	

ERRATA

VOL. I.

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10.	21.	for Hales
11.	22.	for the note, for Calvin and Calvinist.
12.	23.	for the note, read the
13.	24.	Admitted
14.	25.	have
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16.	27.	Indisputable
17.	28.	Dien
18.	29.	putting
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20.	31.	Melton
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INTRODUCTION.

CHAP. I.

IN my former Treatise, *Considerations upon the Universality and Uniformity of the Theocracy*, I endeavoured to remove national and religious prejudices, and to reconcile men to one another, upon the ground of their general relation, as the offspring of the same common parent, the creature of one common Creator—bound by the same obligations of worship and adoration to him, and good-will and assistance to each other; and I proved, that such was the will of God, from the correspondence of all the communications he has been pleased to make to man, from the creation of the world to the last, the most perfect and complete revelation of his will by Jesus Christ and his apostles, by which the pales of all distinctions, between Jew and Gentile, bond and free, have been broken down, and all the different nations of the earth connected into one society, and intended to be united by the bands of one common religion.

I then endeavoured to trace the unhappy causes of the very miserable effects with which the profession of Christianity has been charged, and pointed out some of the abuses which factious and ambitious priests had introduced, perverting the gracious design of its divine institution from uniting and blessing all men, to the horrid ends of exciting hatred, persecution, devastation, and murder: many of the abuses have, thank God, been done away by the reformation which has been effected in this and several other Christian states; but still it is to be lamented, that every church, by retaining some peculiar dogma, which it deems essential, opposes a stumbling-block to the universal spread of Christianity, and supplies its adversaries with powerful weapons for making their attacks upon it. Mystery is the common cloak, in which every absurd and unintelligible dogma is wrapt; though, in truth, I know not a single article in the Christian's creed which may be called a mystery, as the term is used to signify what is inconceivable by, and altogether irreconcilable to human reason; for of such mysteries, as the great Bishop Sherlock observes, in his third discourse, "*There are none in the gospel; or if there were, we should have nothing to do with them.*" All the

“ secret purposes of providence,” he goes on to
 say “ are, in the sense of the scriptures, mys-
 “ teries; as likewise all knowledge which
 “ God has reserved to himself, without com-
 “ municating the knowledge of it to the world,
 “ is a mystery;—but what he has revealed is no
 “ no longer a mystery, but a manifestation of
 “ his will; for mysteries, in the gospel sense of
 “ the word, are not such things as reason can-
 “ not receive, but such things as proceed from
 “ the hidden wisdom of God, and are made
 “ manifest in the gospel of Christ. God has
 “ declared to us, that he has an only-begotten
 “ Son, and that he has an Holy Spirit, who
 “ will sanctify, and be assisting to us in work-
 “ ing out our salvation: this, and agreeable
 “ to this, is the scripture doctrine:—God has
 “ not told us, nor enabled us to conceive, how
 “ his Son and Spirit dwell in him, or how
 “ they came from him;—these, therefore, are
 “ properly mysteries, which are hidden in the
 “ secret wisdom of God, and *which we are no*
 “ *where called upon to enquire after.*” Indeed,
 when we are told to be always ready to give
 an answer to enquiries of the reason of our
 faith, it implies, that the ground of it has
 been made known to us, and consequently
 is no longer a mystery. When St. Paul

says to the Corinthians, “ behold, I shew you “ a mystery ;” can he be supposed to mean, I am going to tell you something which you can neither understand or comprehend? Surely not; for he proceeds to tell them what had indeed been a mystery before he told it to them—the manner in which those who should be alive at the end of the world would be disposed of. “ They shall *not all sleep or die*,” says he, “ *but they shall be changed* ;” for, when he preached the resurrection of the dead, and told them, “ *that which was sown a natural body should be raised a spiritual body*,” they would naturally suppose that the change was produced in the grave, and therefore be at a loss to account for the condition of those bodies which remained alive. This was to them a mystery, till the apostle informed them how it was to be with those bodies; and when he had done so, the mystery was at an end, for they then were as well informed of the condition of the living as they before had been of the dead. In like manner we are to consider every other revelation of the divine will, as instructing us in what was a mystery before it was revealed; but, being revealed, it is no longer a mystery. Indeed, as is justly observed by the learned and pious Bishop O’Burne, that, “ as Christ chose

“ his condition among the lowest classes of
 “ men, and as it was the characteristic distinc-
 “ tion of his gospel, that it was preached to
 “ the poor,” we have the most certain grounds
 for concluding, that his doctrine was cal-
 culated to instruct the unlearned of all ages ;
 that it was as far from his intention to send
 his disciples of the eighteenth century to an
 university doctor for the elucidation of his
 precepts, as it was contrary to his practice
 to send his immediate followers to a Jewish
 Rabbi to expound his doctrine*. “ For if,” says
 the great Sherlock, “ the revelation of the
 “ will of God, made in the gospel, be so
 “ very dark and obscure, that common
 “ honesty, with the assistance of common

* I must not be understood as depreciating the value
 of human learning, or as deeming a proficiency in it
 unnecessary for the ecclesiastics of every Christian sect ;
 for, on the contrary, I think it much to be lamented,
 that all who take upon them the sacred function of in-
 structing others, are not perfectly acquainted with the
 original languages in which the several books of Scrip-
 ture were written, and with the manners and customs
 of the people among whom they were promulgated ; for
 although every thing necessary to salvation, is plainly and
 clearly expressed in the Scriptures, insomuch, that “ he
 who runs, may read ;” there are many things which it is
 proper for the more enlightened to be made acquainted with,
 which require to be explained.

“ sense, cannot discern it; then it cannot be
 “ a rule or measure of religion, or designed
 “ as such by God, who is too wise and too
 “ good to give laws to the world, which can
 “ be of no use to them, but to puzzle and
 “ confound their understandings. We can-
 “ not, therefore, but suppose, that his inten-
 “ tion was to be understood, and his wisdom
 “ permits us not to doubt but that he was
 “ able to explain his meaning;” and the
 same great divine observes, in another place,
 “ that nothing has proved more fatal to reli-
 “ gion than the vain attempts of men to dive
 “ into the unrevealed mysteries of God,
 “ and to account for, upon the principles
 “ of human reason, the things which pro-
 “ ceed from the hidden wisdom of God;” and
 to the same purpose we find the excellent
 Bishop Tillotson, in his two hundred and
 twenty-first sermon, declaring his opinion,
 “ that nothing had been more pernicious to
 “ the Christian religion than the vain pre-
 “ tence of men to greater assurance concern-
 “ ing things relating to it than they can
 “ make good. The mischief of which,” says
 he, “ is this, that when discerning, inquisi-
 “ tive men find that men pretend to greater
 “ matters than they can prove, this makes

“ them doubt of all they say, and to call in
 “ question the truth of Christianity itself;
 “ whereas, if men would be contented to
 “ speak justly of things, and pretend to no
 “ greater assurance than they can bring evi-
 “ dence for, considerate men would be apt to
 “ believe them;” and perfectly conformable
 to the opinion of these great luminaries of
 our church, are the instructions which
 we find the apostle of the Gentiles gave to
 the first Christian Bishops, Timothy and Titus,
 whom he warns to “ beware of adopting any
 “ human inventions to strengthen the doc-
 “ trine of the Son of God, or searching in
 “ the stores of philosophy for weapons to
 “ combat the adversaries of his religion;
 “ *not striving,*” says he, “ *about words to no*
 “ *profit but to the subversion of the hearers;*
 “ *not giving heed to Jewish fables and com-*
 “ *mandments of men; avoiding profane and*
 “ *vain babblings, and opposition of science,*
 “ *falsely so called; neither giving heed to fa-*
 “ *bles and endless genealogies, which minister*
 “ *questions, rather than godly edifying, which*
 “ *is in faith, always bearing in mind, that*
 “ *the end of the command is charity out of a*
 “ *pure heart, and of a good conscience and*
 “ *faith unfeigned, and that a perfect know-*

“ledge of the Scriptures, which contain the
 “revealed will of God, is sufficient *to make*
 “*wise unto salvation.*” Conformable to these
 instructions was his own practice; for,
 although bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, and
 an adept in human literature, he never pro-
 posed any metaphysical articles of faith, or
 scholastic abracadabra, to be believed by his
 converts. He determined to know nothing
 himself, but *Christ the Son of God, and him*
crucified; and that was the doctrine he
 preached in the synagogue at Damascus im-
 mediately after his conversion, as we are told
 in the ix. chapter of Acts; and such was
 the answer given by him and Silas to that
 most important question of the keeper of the
 prison at Philippi—“What must I do to be
 “saved?”—“*Believe on the Lord Jesus*
 “*Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy*
 “*house;*” and his epistles to the churches
 he had founded breathe the same spirit, as
 will be seen in the extracts I have inserted in
 a subsequent chapter, from those to the
 Galatians, Philippians, and Thessalonians. My
 purpose, therefore, in the observations I
 shall make, and the alterations I shall pro-
 pose, in the liturgy, creed, and offices of
 our church, is to render the whole perfectly

conformable to the plain and direct doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, uncontaminated with any dogma or logical deductions; for from the authorities I have already produced I think it may be fairly concluded that God did not send his Son into the world to teach men to make syllogisms. The truth is, Christians do not disagree about the doctrine of Christ or his Apostles; it is the dogmas, the logical deductions and inferences, and the comments which they dispute about; and, like the Pharisees of old, who were scrupulously exact in paying the tythes of mint and cummin, but neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy; modern sectaries dispense with the observance, or fulfil with apathy, the plain precepts of brotherly love, and doing as they would be done by, and contend with vehemence for their peculiar dogma, comment or tradition, respecting matters with which neither Christ or his Apostles intended they should have any thing to do.* Such however

* Barclay, in his apology, for the Quakers, justly satyrizes this antipathy of the different sects, all calling themselves Christians notwithstanding.

We must kill all the wicked, said the Anabaptists, that we that are the Saints may possess the earth. We must burn obstinate heretics, say the Papists, that the holy church of Rome may be purged of rotten members, and may live in

is the attachment which every sect has to its peculiar dogma, that all attempts which have hitherto been made, or I believe I may say that ever will be made, to induce or compel any to renounce his own and embrace that of another, must be vain and fruitless; I shall therefore take a different course, and propose only such terms of union as shall neither adopt or reprobate any prevailing Christian dogma; and I trust there is so much good sense and real christianity among men, that they may be persuaded to concur with each other in a mode of worship, which shall contain nothing which any of them disallows to be christianity, or requires them to profess any thing which they do not all believe. The plan I have adopted has been sanctioned by some of the best and wisest men, and the most zealously attached to the constitution of the church of England; for such, says Lord Clarendon, was the opinion of the ever memorable Hales. "He thought,"

peace; we must cut off seducing Separatists, say the prelatical Protestants, who trouble the peace of the church, and refuse the divine heirarchy and religious ceremonies thereof. We must kill, say the Calvinists Presbyterians, the profane malignants who accuse the holy consistorial and presbyterian government, and seek to defend the popish and prelatish heirarchy, as also those other sectaries that trouble the peace of our church.

says the noble historian, “that pride and passion, more than conscience, were the cause of all separation of christians from each other’s communion, and he frequently said, that that only kept the world from agreeing upon such a liturgy as might bring them into one communion, all doctrinal points upon which men differed in their opinions, being to have no place in any liturgy;” and the sage and acute Bacon expresses a similar opinion in his metaphorical manner; “Wines,” says he, “which at the first treading run gently, are pleasanter than those which are *forced* by the wine-press, for these taste of the stone and the husk of the grape. So those doctrines are exceedingly wholesome and sweet, which flow from the scriptures, gently pressed, and are not wrested into controversies and common places;” and the learned Bishop Wilkins observes, “that it seems to be a principle of nature, to which all nations have consented, that God himself should prescribe the way of his own worship;” and therefore as christians have ample information of the divine will in that respect, it must be deemed high presumption in any set of uninspired men to frame or adopt any other mode, or to mix any fancies of their own with what God him-

self has prescribed. *Neil ne pouvoit être empêché de faire ce que la loi ne défendoit pas Neil ne pouvoit être contraint de faire ce qu'elle n'ordonnoit pas*; are maxims as true and as applicable to religious institutions as they are descriptive of civil liberty.

The liturgy of the church of England is so excellent a composition, that it contains whatever can be collected from scripture to be fit and necessary for a society of christians to offer to the Deity, but *it contains much more also than the scriptures require of christians*, and therefore the paring off of those redundances will be my principal employment; but the doing that will occasion a little change in the arrangement, as well as the recomposing of some of the parts. I do not, however, mean to propose any alterations in our religious system, with the view of improving the alliance between church and state, for I implicitly subscribe to Christ's declaration to Pilate, that *his kingdom is not of this world*, and have always been of opinion that his ministers ought to have very little concern in temporal affairs. The alterations, therefore, which I shall propose, will have no other view than to render our creed, liturgy, and offices, conformable to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles,

and to the practice of the apostles and their immediate followers; and I trust they will be candidly considered as the propositions of a real christian, by which I mean a believer in the eternity and divinity of Jesus Christ, the eternal word and Son of God, and in the atonement and satisfaction made by him for the sins of the whole world; for it must be confessed that many who have made objections to our church-service, have not deserved that title, and the answer which I have often heard from very learned and pious clergymen to such objectors appeared perfectly just; “We all allow,” said they, “that there are many things “ which call for amendment in our common “ prayer book, but would you have us put it into “ the hands of Arians and Socinians to new “ model it?” The scriptures, and the scriptures alone, in their plain and obvious sense, shall therefore be my guide.

I am fully persuaded that it is the wish of the pious and excellent governors of our church, to spread the knowledge of the christian dispensation with the fame of our arms, and the probity of our government. But with what hope of success can we undertake to instruct others in the doctrines of christianity, when we are ourselves so divided in opinion

concerning them. This variety in our principles the author of *Deism Revealed*, sets in a strong and striking light in the following words, which he puts into the mouth of Duchain, “I want,*” says he, “to go to heaven the nearest way; who will be my guide?” “I will,” says the English priest; “no one knows the way so well as I;” “have a care,” says the papist, “if you go with him he will lead you to the devil; follow me, and though you shut your eyes, I will lead you a short and pleasant cut; we shall be there presently.”—“Hold,” says the Scotch priest, “if you go with that fellow he will lead you strait to the whore of Babylon, and pick your pocket by the way.” “Friend, step with me,” says the Quaker, “and thee shalt enjoy the light of a lamp I have within.” “Pshaw, there is no need of burning day-light;” says the Socinian “that fellow, however attempting to snuff the candle of christianity, hath put it out, and is as dark within as a dungeon;—I have the *new light*, a secret that makes the way to heaven as broad and as smooth as a turnpike.”

It cannot be denied, that the most proper means to obviate this objection is, to reduce

* Observations on the Liturgy, formerly published.

all our religious systems to the one common standard of the gospel, to exclude every doctrine which is not plainly and directly taught and inculcated as necessary to salvation, leaving the theories, comments, and inferences, of frail men, to perish with their authors.

Extraordinary circumstances have connected the forces of the state, and assimilated our people, with nations to whose manners and religious opinions we were almost intire strangers, and who had imbibed the strongest prejudices against us ; we ought, then, surely, to take advantage of these favourable circumstances, to induce them to become partakers with us of the common salvation.

The emperor of Russia is said to have in contemplation, the re-union of the Greek and Roman churches ; by which, I trust, he means the establishment of the Greek mode in Italy, instead of the Romish superstition, and thence abolish the worship of saints and relics, as well as of wafers ; which I conceive may now be easily done, as that people must have learnt, by dear-bought experience, the insufficiency of such protectors, and must rightly conclude, that those who cannot take care of their own affairs, are not fit to be trusted with the care of others ; and, if the emperor Paul effects

this, a great progress will be made towards the restoration of primitive Christianity throughout Europe; for it appears from the following statement, which the learned Dr. Gregory has given, of the tenets of the Greek church, that a coalition between that church and the church of England, upon the principles I am endeavouring to establish, might confidently be expected. “ The distinguishing tenets of the “ Greek church” says Dr. Gregory, “ are the “ following:—

1. “ They disown the authority of the pope, “ and deny, that the church of Rome is the “ true Catholic church.

2. “ They do not baptise their children till “ they are three, four, five, six, ten, nay, “ sometimes eighteen, years of age.

3. “ They assert, that the sacrament of the “ Lord’s supper ought to be administered in “ both kinds, and they give it to children “ immediately after baptism.

4. “ They deny that there is any such place “ as purgatory, but they pray to God to have “ mercy on the dead at the general judgment.

5. “ They exclude confirmation, extreme “ unction, and matrimony, out of the seven “ sacraments.

6 “ They deny auricular confession to be a

“ divine precept, and say, it is only a positive
 “ institution of the church.

7. “ They pay no religious homage to the
 “ Eucharist.

8. “ They administer the communion in
 “ both kinds to the laity in sickness and in
 “ health, though they have never applied
 “ themselves to their confessors, because they
 “ are persuaded that a lively faith is all which
 “ is requisite for the worthy receiving the
 “ Lord’s supper.

9. “ They maintain that the Holy Ghost
 “ proceeds from the father only.

10. “ They admit of no images in relief or
 “ embossed work, but use paintings and sculp-
 “ tures in copper and silver.

11. “ They approve of the marriage of
 “ priests before consecration.

12. “ They condemn all fourth marriages.

13. “ They observe a number of holy days,
 “ and keep four fasts in the year, of which the
 “ fast in lent is the chief.”

To point out, however, the reform which is
 necessary to be made in the mode of the pub-
 lic profession of Christianity in this country, so
 as to render the church of England a model
 and example for all others, “ is an undertak-

“ ing,* which I humbly conceive better becomes
 “ a lay-member of the church than an eccle-
 “ siastic; for, as the latter must, when he takes
 “ upon him the sacred function, declare his
 “ assent and consent to the whole of the articles
 “ and liturgy, he would expose himself to the
 “ charge of insincerity, were he afterwards
 “ to find fault with any thing contained in
 “ them. So having once made up his mind to
 “ an implicit submission to things as he found
 “ them, he never afterwards suffers his judg-
 “ ment to exercise itself in an examination of
 “ their propriety, and perfect conformity to the
 “ holy scriptures. These shackles upon the
 “ judgment a lay-man is exempt from. Let
 “ it not, therefore, be deemed impertinent in
 “ one who has long been in the habits of poli-
 “ tical investigation, to offer his assistance in a
 “ matter of such vast importance to the gene-
 “ ral welfare and happiness.”

In order, however, to obviate the imputation
 of presumption, for undertaking a work for
 which my known political occupations might
 be supposed to have rendered me utterly unfit,
 it may be necessary to give some account of
 myself.

* Observations on the Liturgy formerly published.

My father, although a practising physician, always devoted Sunday afternoon to the religious instruction of his family; for the servants were called in, while his children read in their turns portions of the old and new Testaments, upon which he required them to make their own observations as they went on, and in their own words; and he afterwards fully explained the purpose and meaning of the passages, and drew the proper inferences from them, which he was well qualified to do, having studied divinity at Glasgow, where he was much respected as a relative of the famous John Knox, intending to having taken orders as a Presbyterian clergyman; but that university having transmitted by him to Bishop Burnett their sentiments of that prelate's comprehension plan, the conferences my father had with him, Bishop Tennison, and other eminent but moderate English divines,* so entirely satisfied him of the harmless nature and innoxious quality of certain modes of the church of England, held in abomination by the church of Scotland, and had so great an effect on his candid and pious mind, that he altered his intention of becoming a Presbyterian divine, and he quitted Glasgow

* I have heard my father often say that the chief obstacle to the comprehension plan taking place, was the difficulty of

and became a student of phyfic at Edinburgh, where he took his degree; but he was fo far from adopting the character of a free-thinker or deift, as giving him an air of importance as a phyfician, and impreffing the great vulgar with an opinion of his fuperior judgment, as fome modern phyficians feem to fuppose it does, that he always blended the duties of religion with the exercife of his profeflion; and he never went out to vifit his patients without firft imploring the divine affiftance in his clofet; —a praftife which he deemed of the higheft importance and a moft indifpenfible duty; for he confidered *private prayer* as the parent of devotion, and the nourifher of religion in the foul, without which the repetition of forms of prayer, and the compliance with public ordinances, have but little effect upon the heart, and are apt to induce a confidence of fufficiently performing our duty by a regular and ftated attendance upon them. He therefore enjoined his children, with all his paternal authority, the daily and nightly praftice of *private prayer*; and, as he well knew that it was

providing for the great number of the clergy which would have been fuperseded (*or seconded*, as the military phrafe is), the lord treafurer refufing to grant pensions to them for fubfiftence, until vacancies fhould happen.

not only not taught, but the practice ridiculed and rendered impracticable at boarding schools and boarding houses, he never placed a child at any of them, considering the improvement in classical learning to be obtained there, as too dearly purchased by the loss of religious principles, and a relish for that most exalted pleasure the human frame is capable of sustaining ; *the enjoyments of a devout invocation of the deity.** From a child, therefore, have I known the holy scriptures ; and, as they taught me that religion was the chief thing about which a wise man ought to care, I have in every situation that providence thought fit to place me, found, or made opportunities, to attend to its duties ; especially on the sabbath in public and in my own family, in imitation of my father's

* The old monkish system of stated and formal prayers is still in use at our great seminaries of learning, and dignified with the name of religious education ; when, in fact, even the elements of Christianity are never taught the pupils. Instruction in religion might indeed be deemed unnecessary for the laity before the reformation, as in every day of the year they had a tutelar saint to watch over them, and at every corner of a street a celestial guardian standing sentry to protect the passengers ; and, if they were in luck, they might have the lighted taper of the *bon dieux* himself to conduct them through a dark alley, or shew them the way out of a *cul de sac* ; but when the reformation dismissed these guards, the system of education should have been adapted to the new order of things ; and, when we were left without pro-

practice, for I was far from considering religion and politics incompatible studies ; for as the object of both is to promote the welfare and happiness of mankind, attention to the religion of the state must be equally the duty of the statesman as of the divine ; since nothing is more evident than that all human laws and institutions, and all political systems which do not pursue those objects, are worthless and despicable, and the experience of all past ages, as well as our own observations upon the nature of the human mind, must convince us that the belief of an infinite omniscient and omnipotent *being*, and of a future state of rewards and punishments, is absolutely necessary to give efficacy and stability to all political institutions, and in as much as it appears from the natural and moral constitution of things in this world, that men were formed for society, and that religion is necessary to the well-being of civil society—religion must be of God, and true, for God could not leave his creatures without what was necessary for them, nor make a lye necessary, and we see the wretched shifts the French rulers are put to for a substitute for religious belief, and the miserable detection from dead saints, we ought to have been taught to seek for it from the ever living God.

soluteness of morals in the people, and anarchy in the government, that have followed the abolition of religious observances.

That these sentiments are neither novel, nor the wild enthusiasm of methodism, however modern self-dubbed philosophers or politicians may deem them, will appear from the following declaration of some of the most eminent heathens.

Plutarch denominates religion “ the cement
“ of all community, and the chief bases of all
“ legislative power.”

“ Take but away,” says Cicero, “ the awe of
“ religion, and all that fidelity and justice so ne-
“ cessary for the keeping up of human society
“ must perish with it.” And Seneca is still more
pointed to our purpose, when he enjoins “ magis-
“ trates to be careful to give public testimonies
“ of their being religious and devout, for which
“ he gives this double reason, because the peo-
“ ple will be less subject to entertain any jea-
“ lousy or suspicion of suffering injury, from
“ such who they believe to be religious, and
“ withal they will be less subject to attempt the
“ doing of injury against such ; as knowing
“ that good magistrates are after a more espe-
“ cial manner under the divine favour and pro-
“ tection, having God to fight with them and
“ for them.”

As, however, the public profession of Christianity is sanctioned by the laws of this country, and a legal provision made for the support of its ministers, the attention of the statesman as well as of the divine is especially to be employed in watching over its effects upon the morals of the people, and the utmost care should be taken that the established modes and ordinances be so simple, pure, and intelligible, and so strictly corresponding with the revelations of the *divine will* as not to perplex or mislead the judgment, and neither to fritter down the solid principles of a correct morality, founded upon an unfeigned faith, into ritual ceremonies or superstitious observances; nor to chill the sublime ardour of rational devotion, by the cold damp of formal and unmeaning ceremonies; for, as it has often been observed, the two extremes of superstition and infidelity nearly approach each other; for a religion which inculcates doctrines, or holds out articles of faith as essential to salvation, which revolt common sense and require a total dereliction of every principle of science, and the abandonment of all rational faculties, very naturally induces an opinion that the whole system is absurd, and to be reprobated by every man whose understanding

is superior, and his notions more elevated than the common herd of the priest ridden vulgar; “for such was,” says Mr. Kett, “the state of religion throughout Europe, that when the revival of letters enabled men to see the mass of absurdities, contradictions, and impieties which were taught by the church of Rome to be essential parts of Christianity, scepticism was the natural result of this discovery ;*” and that such was lately the unhappy state of things in France, and the other Roman Catholic countries of Europe, is well known, for the whole people were divided into these two classes, the *devôts* and the atheists; and when I hear the rulers of our protestant church frequently lament the decline of devotional fervour in the performance of religious duties, and complain of the rapid progress of infidel philosophy in this country, I confess I cannot help imputing the calamity deplored to the imperfections in our

* “Les sceptiques, frappés du choix de ces divers systèmes, conclurent qu’il n’y a rien de certain; qu’en fait de religion et de morale un philosophe doit s’en tenir au doute absolu. De là est née l’indifférence pour toutes les opinions à laquelle on donne le nom de tolérance. Dans l’excès du délire, l’esprit humain ne peut aller plus loin.” *Traité historique & dogmatique de la vraie Religion, &c.* par M. L’Abbé Bergier, tome I. p. 32.

own religious system; those imperfections being done away, and a general conformity in the mode of public worship, and one simple scriptural creed being once established among Christians, the difficulty which has hitherto impeded the progress of Christianity, and the conversion of the Hebrews, and the professors of Islamism, would be greatly lessened, if not entirely removed. But as it is very evident that the Christian religion is intended to be the universal religion of all mankind, and comprehends all the revelations of the divine will, which have ever been made to man, and is adapted to man in the highest state of perfection he is capable of attaining in this life, and is calculated to fit him for the enjoyment of a far more exalted state in a future stage of existence.—When we propose this religion to the several description of the inhabitants of the earth, it is fit that we should consider what degree of information of the divine will those to whom we do propose it already possess, and upon that information found our instructions.

To the Jews we have only to declare, that we worship the same one, only Jehovah, which spake to the Israelites from mount Sinai, saying, “thou shalt have none other God’s

but me," and to prove to them that the eternal *word*, the Messiah, is come in the flesh; to the Ishmalites we must declare that we worship the God of Abraham, and that his *seed in whom all the nations of the earth were promised to be blessed*, has been born and made atonement for the sins of the whole world. To the descendants of Ham we must declare that the God whom we adore is the El Eloim, or God of Gods of Noah, and the Antideluvians; that the revelations of the divine will, which had been made to them and collected by Noah, into his seven precepts, we observe; but, that the El Eloim having made a further communication of his divine will to the descendants of Shem, we had also adopted it; and the El Eloim having since sent into the world, that seed of the woman which he declared to Adam *should bruise the serpent's head*, we have been taught by him a more perfect way of pleasing God.

All nations, as I have shewn in the former treatise, to which I have so often refered, appear to have retained some traditional knowledge of the precepts of Noah;—there can therefore be no great difficulty in leading them to adopt the decalogue as a more perfect revelation of the divine will, and having thus

brought them to acknowledge the divine communication with Moses, the transition to the other prophets will be easy, and having made them Israelites we have a firm ground on which to build Christianity; and in truth I knew not how unenlightened Pagans or Idolaters are to be taught Christianity, without being first instructed in the Mosaic dispensation; for we find Christ appealing to the law and the prophets, as well as to his miracles, for the truth of his divine mission; and St. Paul, with peculiar emphasis, denominate the Mosaic law, the *schoolmaster* of Christianity.

The Christian cause suffers not a little injury among infidels, through the weak apologies of systematic defenders, against the charge of its want of universality. It is usual for them in their answer to that charge to ascribe the success of Mahomet to the power of his sword, and to impute the general spreading of his doctrine to the terror of his arms; not considering that God is equally the giver of all victory, as well as the fountain of all wisdom and goodness; would they confess the truth, they would find no difficulty in giving a complete answer to the objection, for they might truly assert that it was not Christianity that Mahomet prevailed over, but an abominable com-

pound of Idolatry, Polytheism, and Paganism, to which the impious Asiatic priests had given the name of Christianity; nor is it Christianity that Islamism is still adverse to, and continues to oppress, but superstition and idolatry, which those who are called Christian missionaries inculcate under the name of Christianity, and therefore it is no wonder they have failed in making converts of the worshipers of the one only God, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, which is the only God adored and worshiped by the professors of Islamism, as well as by the Hebrews. Were the Christian missionaries instructed to address those people in the manner and words that the Apostles addressed the Jews and Pagans after they were inspired by the holy spirit, their success would be very different, and Mahomet, as well as Moses, would be found *schoolmasters of Christ*; for surely the belief and worship of one infinite and eternal God, the creator and governor of all things, and of a future state of rewards and punishments are the best and only foundation, on which Christianity can be built. The following extracts from the *Acts of the Apostles*, as recorded by St. Luke, will shew in what manner *they* addressed those they were sent to convert, and the doctrine they

taught. "Ye men of Israel hear these words" (says Peter to the Jews), "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain, and denied the holy one and the just, and killed the prince of life whom God hath raised up, having loosed the bonds of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden by it; for David, speaking concerning him, saith, "thou wilt not leave my soul in the state of the dead, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; the God of our fathers hath glorified his son, Jesus, whom ye delivered up; therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shewed forth this which ye now see and hear, therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ; I wot that through ignorance ye did it as did your rulers, but those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled—Repent ye, therefore, that your sins

may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the Lord, and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive, until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began.—For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your bretheren, like unto me him shall ye hear in all things, whatever he shall say unto you, yea and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foreto'd of those days, ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying, unto Abraham, in thy seed shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God having raised up his Son, Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities, neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins!

And when Peter came to Cornelius he reminds the assembly, which was partly compo-

fed of Pagans, of the word which was preached by Jesus Christ, whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him. To him, says he, gave all the prophets witness that through his name whosoever beleiveth in him shall receive remission of sins. Him the Jews slew and hanged on a tree, but God raised him up the third day and shewed him openly, and he commanded us, his chosen witnessses, to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. Conformably to all this we find St. Paul immediately after his conversion preaching in the synagogues of Damascus, *that Christ is the Son of God*; and the answer Silas and him gave to the keeper of the prison at Philippi who asked, what must I do to be saved, as I have before observed, was only *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*; and thy house, and they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house, and they were baptised, he and all his. At Ephesus too, we find Paul speaking boldly in the synagogue, and in the school of Tyrannus, *disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God, for the space of two years, so that all they*

which dwelt in Asia Minor heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks, and when the Ephesian elders came to him at Miletus, he reminds them that he had kept back nothing that was profitable unto them, but had shewed them and taught them publickly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, for he asserts he had not shunned to declare unto them all the council of God. Philip we find also, after he had expounded to the Ethiopian eunuch the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Christ's sufferings and death, and preached unto him Jesus, answers his question of what hindered him to be baptized, by saying, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest; and upon his answering, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Philip commanded the charriot to stop, and went down with him into the water and baptized him.

Such was the conduct and such the doctrine of the apostles, actuated by the inspiration of the holy spirit; and throughout the whole we find no mysteries, no scholastic gibberish, no metaphysical special pleading, but plain words and sound meaning, for such and such only did the holy spirit ever dictate. From the evidence of the scriptures they proved that Jesus was the Christ, the eternal word, and everlasting son of

the Almighty God, and the Messiah, the promised seed of Abraham after the flesh, foretold by Moses and all the prophets, who have all shewn his death, while David has declared his resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven. For, say they, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, his eternal father, who had by his prophets foretold all this of him, having raised him from the dead, glorified him as his son, by exalting him into heaven, and placing him at his own right hand, where he is to remain until the final consummation of all things (when he will come to be the judge of quick and dead,) from whence he had sent the Holy Ghost to inspire his Apostles, and give them the gift of tongues to enable them to make him known, and to teach his doctrine to all nations.

Let us now compare with this doctrine of the apostles, the doctrine which the missionaries of even our own reformed church are enjoined, by our articles, creeds, liturgy, and offices, to preach to their unbelieving hearers.

Jesus of Nazareth, they are bound to say, whom I preach unto you as the promised seed of Abraham, the Messiah who was crucified at Jeru-

sa-lem, is ascended into heaven and is God * of God, not only the son of God but, God † the son, for when he took upon him our flesh and was made ‡ man he took the manhood § into God with its flesh, bones, and all things pertaining to the perfection of man's nature, || so that he is perfect God ¶ and perfect man, the second person of the sacred trinity which compose God ; for I must inform you of a truth which was not revealed to Abraham or to Moses, which is, that God consists of three ** persons, a trinity †† in unity, and that this unity also subsists in each of the three persons reciprocally ; so that God is a unity ‡‡ in trinity, as well as a trinity in unity, and although the three persons together is God, yet each of them is separately and co-equally §§ God also, and if you do not believe this you cannot be saved, |||| but without doubt you must perish everlastingly ; I must also inform you, that you and all your forefathers, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, David, and all the prophets, were born in sin, ¶¶ and from the womb deserving God's

* Nicene Creed.

† Litany.

‡ Nicene Creed

§ Athenasean Creed.

|| Articles 4th.

¶ Athenasean Creed.

** Athenasean Creed.

†† Athenasean Creed,

‡‡ Athenasean Creed.

§§ Athenasean Creed.

|||| Athenasean Creed.

¶¶ Catechism.

wrath and damnation, * as the descendants of Adam, and that all your good works have the nature of sin, and cannot be pleasing to Almighty God ;† but be of good cheer nevertheless, for whatever may have become of your fore-fathers and the prophets, you, by being baptised by me, will be washed from that original pollution, and become regenerated ‡ ; and what is still more comfortable for you, when the bishop who ordained me a priest, presented me with the Holy Ghost, § he gave me authority to absolve you from all your other sins. ||

Who now that compares this doctrine of our missionaries with the preachings of the apostles, will be surpris'd at the little progress we make in converting the descendants of Abraham and adherants to *his* faith, or rather will he not be apt to doubt whether if the apostles had preached it instead of their own, they would have made many converts, notwithstanding their miraculous powers. But besides, we find our missionaries who are generally the votaries of system, are apt to run into the most dangerous error, condemning in-

* Article 9th.

† Article 13th.

‡ Office of Baptism and Confirmation.

§ Ordination of Priests.

Ordination of Priests, and office of visitation of the sick.

discriminately all religious institutions (as sinful) which existed antecedent to the promulgation of christianity, without considering that as God is omniscient, and his will immutable, nothing which he at any time commanded can ever become sinful to perform, although from change of circumstances, it may be superceded or dispensed with. Thus it never can be a crime in any man to keep holy the seventh day, although christians substitute the first day of the week in its stead ; nor can it ever be a crime in any descendant of Abraham to circumcise his child on the eighth day, although christians, by baptising their infants, have made baptism the mode of initiation into the christian covenant, which includes that made with Abraham.—It is, however, well worth remarking, that the council at Jerusalem, the only council that ever had any right to make rules for christians, do not declare any opinion respecting the observance of the 7th day, although they acknowledge that Moses was read that day in every synagogue, nor respecting circumcision among the Jewish profelites, nor do they in any wise condemn it as improper in the Gentile converts, but merely by not mentioning it among the things *to be required of them*, tacitly signify it to be unnecessary ; and we see Paul

several years after, thought it so far from a crime to circumcise a Gentile, that he caused Timothy to be circumcised. Indeed the astonishing effects of that right in suppressing a most abominable idolatry, would incline one to wish its continuance among unenlightened nations, and especially as its toleration to converts from Islamism, and Judaism, would be a great means of drawing over profelites from both. The statement I have given in my former treatise, of the doctrine and morality of the Koran, makes no very wide difference between Islamism and christianity ; and the following account of the funeral service performed by the Iman at the grave of a Musselman, as given us by Dr. Russel, in his excellent History of Aleppo, is an additional proof :—

“ O man ! from earth thou wast at first created, and to the earth thou dost now return :
 “ this transitory abode being the first step of
 “ thy progress to the mansions of eternity.
 “ If in thy actions in life thou hast been beneficent, God will pardon thy transgressions ;
 “ and if thou hast not, still the mercy of God
 “ has no bounds. But remember what thou
 “ did’st profess in this world, that God is thy
 “ Lord, and Mohammed thy prophet, and thy
 “ belief in all the prophets and apostles, and
 “ that God’s forgiveness is amply extended.”

No credit certainly is due to Mahomet's pretensions to divine communications, yet he must be allowed to have been a most efficient instrument in the hand of providence for abolishing idolatry, pollytheism and atheism, among the unlightened people of a large portion of the earth; and rescuing the worship of the one true God from that cloud of superstition, compounded of all three, in which the Asiatic priests had enveloped Christianity. The recent support this country has afforded the Ottoman Government must greatly serve to do away that hereditary and but too well founded resentment the Islamites have entertained against Christians, on account of the crusades; and I cannot help thinking it a fortunate circumstance that England, the most truly Christian state in Europe, has defended and preserved for the Ottomans, that very country against the attacks of apostates from christianity, as that circumstance cannot fail to operate powerfully against their ancient prejudice, and if that were removed on their part, and the unscriptural dogmas of christians given up on ours, there would be little doubt but that the crescent would be found to be a harbinger of the cross throughout Asia and Africa.

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OF THE GOSPELS.

CHAP. II.

HAVING shewn in my former treatise, that the will of God has been communicated to men in the different ages of the world, by eight several modes, by the voice of celestial ministers, by celestial ministers in human forms, by dreams and visions, by symbolical appearances, by inspiration of prophets, by Jesus Christ the divine agent in human flesh, and lastly, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, through the apostles and their immediate successors ordained by them ; and as the written records which have come down to us of these divine communications, contain the only information we of the present times can have of the Creator's will, the authenticity and accuracy of those records, are of all objects of enquiry the most important. In the publication above referred to, I have examined the general ground of the claim of the Jewish canonical books to divine inspiration, and offered some reasons for confining our adoption to those which have been sanctioned by Christ or his

apostles, which are evidently confined to the writings of Moses, and of the six greater and twelve lesser prophets, which the church of England has received. The other books, as the article expresses it, have been admitted, because there never has been any doubt among the Jewish rabbies concerning them; but inasmuch as they carry with them no internal evidence of divine inspiration, and rest wholly upon the sanction of the Sanhedrim, whose claim to inspiration I have shewn to be founded on a forgery; it is unfit to denominate them scripture, and to class them with the sacred communications of the divine will by Moses and the prophets. The first christians, indeed, did well to avoid all controversy with the Jews, respecting their canon; for as the proofs of Christ being the Messiah could only be drawn from them, the impeachment of any of the books which the Jews acknowledged would have thrown a doubt upon the authenticity of the whole; and as the Christians quoted only the writings of Moses and the prophets, which carried with them the evidence of their own inspiration, they left all the others without observation, as writings with which they had nothing to do; but the present state of christianity does not allow of any excuse for our admitting so

large a portion of the Jewish canon into our's. As, however, I have made several remarks upon the received books of the Old Testament in my former publication, I shall in this, confine my observations to the canonical books of the new.

I know it is the general opinion that the gospel of St. Matthew was written before that of Mark, and some go so far as to suppose the latter to be only an abridgment of the former; but the internal evidence upon which I chiefly rely fully confutes that supposition, and satisfies my mind that Mark's was the first compilation. He begins his narrative with the notorious public facts of John's baptism, and of Christ's being declared the Son of God by a voice from Heaven, when he came out of the water, after being baptized by John. This is the ordinary practice of those who first set about compiling a history of the life and actions of any extraordinary person. They begin with his first appearance in the character in which he performs the actions they mean to give an account of; it is the future historian who traces back the descent and juvenile performances of the hero, whose celebrity has now rendered interesting every particular respecting him. And this we see Mat-

thew has done, and has also related many other particulars which are not to be found in Mark, and which it cannot be supposed Mark would have omitted mentioning, if he had seen Matthew's gospel before he compiled his own. These are, the account of John's birth; Gabriel's mission to Mary; the birth of Christ, and the angel's declaration of it to the shepherds; Christ's admirable sermon upon the mount; John's message to Christ; the sin against the Holy Ghost; the parables of the ten talents, and of the labourers in the vineyard; and of the ten virgins, and of the debtor and creditor; the miracles of healing the Centurion's son, and the ten lepers; the palsied man, and the withered hand. The same mode of proof also satisfies my mind that neither Matthew nor Luke saw the gospel of the other before they compiled their own; for had Matthew seen Luke's gospel, can it be supposed he would have omitted the beautiful parables of Dives and Lazarus, and of the prodigal son; as also that of the unjust steward, which Luke has so well reported; or had Luke seen St. Matthew's gospel, he would have given so imperfect and unconnected an account of Christ's sermon on the mount as he has done, or would he have omitted the beautiful para-

bles of the ten virgins, and of the debtor and creditor.

This internal evidence, as I have already said, satisfies my mind that neither of the three copied from the other, but that each compiled from such materials as he was able to procure ; and as we are told that Matthew was a receiver of the customs, we may hence conclude he was an expert pen-man, and having attended when Christ delivered his sermon on the mount, he took notes of the discourse, from which he was able to frame so accurate and ample an account of it ; and perhaps it was the attention and diligence which he manifested upon that occasion which recommended him to the honour of being afterwards called to be an apostle. His general attendance upon Christ, and frequent conversation with the other apostles, furnished him with many particulars which Mark had no means of coming at the knowledge of ; and as Luke was appointed secretary to the whole body of the apostles, as appears by the account he has given us of the proceedings of the council at Jerusalem, and afterwards travelled with Paul and Barnabas, while they went together, and after their separation, continued with Paul many years, during which he made frequent

visits to Palestine, he had opportunities of obtaining more particular information than even Matthew upon some points. Considering these gospels as the compilations of the evangelists, to whom they are ascribed from such authentic documents as they were possessed of, or could procure, in no respect takes from their authenticity, or lessens the authority of any of them; for none of the three evangelists make any claim to supernatural assistance; and Luke expressly declares, in his introduction, what his motives were for compiling his gospel history. But the internal evidence to be found in the three gospels themselves, fully proves them to have been compilations; and it appears most evidently that the facts related are more or less circumstantially told, according to the compiler's means of information.

Nor does the denying inspiration to the evangelists in any degree lessen our obligation to obey the precepts contained in their gospels; for it is not their own precepts they utter, nor their own actions they narrate, but those of the divine person of whose words and actions they profess to give an account; and, therefore, all we have to require of them, is fidelity in the relation, and a well founded assurance that the words they

have recorded were actually spoken, and the actions performed by Christ; and of this we have abundant testimony, as may be seen in Archdeacon Pailey's excellent treatise upon the subject. The objection, however, to the authenticity of the gospels, arising from the inaccuracy of the quotations, and comments of the books of the old Testament, to be found in them, has never been properly obviated by any of the answers which I have seen. I shall, therefore, attempt it, by simply shewing that those quotations, references, and comments, were not made by the evangelists themselves, but were written as notes on the margin of their copies, by Jewish profelites, and have since been inserted in the text by the transcribers, either through ignorance, carelessness, or to serve some purpose of their employers; and this will clearly appear to have been the case, from the method I have pursued of taking out of the text several of those quotations, references, and comments, and placing them, as I suppose they originally stood, upon the margin; for it will thence be evident, to the plainest understanding, that the text, instead of suffering any injury by their removal, is more clear and consistent without them. This *primæ*

faciæ evidence, as I think I may call it, will derive much force from the consideration that none of the evangelists were scribes or rabbies, men skilled in the writings of Moses and the prophets; nor was it their purpose to make comments upon the facts or sayings they were recording, but merely to arrange them properly, and narrate them truly; or, as St. Luke expresses it, to *set in order those things which had been delivered to him, by those, who from the beginning, were eye witnesses and ministers of the word*; and it is particularly to be remarked, that although Matthew's gospel abounds with such quotations and comments, and there are some in Mark and several in John, not one is to be found in Luke; the reason of which probably is, that Luke compiled and published his gospel at Rome (as appears from several circumstances, but particularly from his record of the Lord's prayer, being without the doxology) where there were no learned Hebrew proselytes to make notes or comments upon the copies they procured. But, as Matthew, Mark, and John, compiled or published their gospels in Palestine, the learned rabbies, when they became converts, made notes and comments upon the margins of their copies; and as

the doxology, which we find added to the Lord's prayer, in Matthew, was in use among the Jews; as the conclusion of their ordinary prayers, they judged it not improper to make it the conclusion of the Lord's prayer also. That such marginal notes might creep into the text will easily be conceived, when it is recollected that all the ancient copies of the gospel were in manuscript, and that it was the constant practice to leave wide margins to all writings, for the purpose of making notes, and that as some of those into whose hands the first copies would come might be possessed of facts which the writer had omitted, or was unacquainted with, they would of course set them down on the margin; and, indeed, it is naturally to be supposed, that the copies which have come down to us, are the result of much emendation and addition, and have undergone the severest scrutiny among those who were witnesses of the facts, and had heard the sayings recorded in them before they received the sanction of public approbation. The marginal notes, however, which I have taken out, I do not suppose to have been introduced into the text of the earliest copies, but have been inserted some time after. And this supposition appears to

have the sanction of the very industrious Mr. Berryman, who, in his critical examination of the various readings in the numerous manuscript copies of the gospels which he examines, acknowledges that there are various passages in the gospels that are supposed to have been taken from one of the evangelists and put into the gospel of another; and this, he says, may have been done by way of note and illustration, in some manuscripts and afterwards by transcribers of those copies taken into the text. And he adds, “ it may possibly have happened that some glosses have also crept into the text in other parts of the sacred writings, and wherever this can be made appear, such glosses are only to be esteemed as interpolations.” As, however, their introduction has given occasion to much ill founded cavil, it were to be wished they were restored to their original situation. I shall make but one more observation upon these three gospels, which is the remarkable agreement of all three in their relation of Christ’s prophecy of the destruction of the temple, (although, as I shall presently shew, there is a misplacement of the particulars in the order of the relation);* the reason of which most

* By considering the gospel histories, as collections of

probably is, that as the prophecy was delivered in the presence of only a few of the apostles, there were only a few records made of it; but as it was a matter of such great importance to all the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem, we may naturally suppose many copies were dispersed among them, and thence it was that each of the evangelists had nearly the same account to transcribe from; and as the like circumstance may have occurred in other instances, the similarity of their relations may be accounted for in the same manner, without supposing the one to be copied from the other. The misplacement I have taken notice of in the records we have of this prophecy, is in the insertion by Mark, of the 24th, 25th, 26th, and 27th ver. of the 13th, chap. before the 28th, 29th, 30th, and 31st, verses, which they ought to follow; for as Christ is evidently giving an account of two events, one of which is the destruction of the temple, and

the written documents or oral testimonials of the actions and sayings of Christ, we are furnished with a like reason for the misplacement of particulars in their several accounts, with that which is universally allowed, as the excuse for the misplacements observed in the books of the old Testament, which is: the accounts being written on separate leaves, or collected from the relations of a variety of living witnesses.

the other the final destruction of the earth, they ought to have been kept separate, and the one finished before the other is begun; whereas they are now blended together, and by that means rendered confused, and liable to objection. In Mark, it should stand thus:—

Verse 22, chap. 13. “For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed, behold I have foretold you all things. Now learn a parable of the fig-tree, when her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near, so ye in like manner, &c.”

“Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done, heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

Ver. 23. “But in those days *after that tribulation*, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken, and then shall they see the son of man coming in the clouds with great glory; and then shall he send his angels, and shall gather his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost parts of the earth, to the

uttermoſt part of the heaven. 32. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the ſon, but the father; take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is, for the ſon of man is as a man taking a far journey, &c.”

St. Matthew's account correſponds with Mark's, but is more explicit, and the miſ-placement is only in four verſes, the 29th, 30th, 31ſt, and 32nd, which ought to come in after the 35th, and then the account will run thus:—

The 25th verſe, “Behold I have told you before, wherefore if they ſhall ſay unto you, &c.”

“For as the lightening cometh, &c.”

“For whereſoever the carcaſe is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Now learn a parable of the fig-tree, &c.”

“So likewise ye, when ye ſhall ſee all theſe things, know that it is near even at the door. Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, this generation ſhall not paſs till all theſe things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but my words ſhall not paſs away.”

“Immediately *after the tribulation of thoſe days* ſhall the ſun be darkened, and the moon

shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, but my father only; for as in the days of Noe, so shall the coming of the son of man be, &c."

St. Luke's account contains more particulars, though it corresponds with the other two; and the necessary transposition consists of the replacement of four verses, viz, the 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th, which ought to follow the 32nd, and then the chapter will read thus: Ver. 23. "But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days, for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gen-

tiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Verse 29. “ And he spake to them a parable: behold the fig-tree, and all the trees, &c.”

“ So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye, that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily, verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled; heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

And “ *there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth, distresses of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and then shall they see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory; and when these things begin to come to pass, then look and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh; and take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be over-charged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares; for as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may*

be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the son of man."

Without meaning to derogate from the authority of the other three gospels, I consider that by St. John, as having a peculiar claim to our reverence, not only on account of the purpose with which it was written, that of declaring the divine nature of Christ, as the Son of God, but because the writer often appears to speak by divine inspiration, and to deliver the discourses and private ejaculations of Christ in a manner that testifies they were communicated to him by the immediate revelation of Christ himself. (I do not mean to be understood as representing all the historical events, related by St. John, and not noticed by the other evangelists, as communicated to him by inspiration, for, on the contrary, I suppose him to have received the account of the first miracle Christ wrought at the marriage feast in Cana, from Mary, who we know resided with John after Christ's crucifixion, and which none of the other evangelists had an opportunity of knowing.*) But on this

* Dr. Claget, in his paraphrase of the 4th verse of the second chapter of John, in which the account of this miracle is given, and which Dr. Clarke has adopted, appears

very account, it becomes more necessary to remove the marginal notes which have crept into his text also to their proper place, than it even is to do it in the other gospels, and especially as one of those notes is of most mischievous consequence, which is that numbered the 51st and 52d verses of the 11th chapter; which imputes to the inspiration of the Holy

to me to have mistaken the plain meaning of the text, as learned men are very apt to do, by supposing some abstruse meaning where there is none. The text says, "when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, they have no wine," by which these learned paraphrists suppose, Mary intended to desire him to work a miracle to procure some for them, although she had never seen him work any. Whereas her intention could be no other than to inform her son, that, as their entertainers had no more wine it was time for them to go home, as guests generally do when that is the case; but Christ, intending to avail himself of the occasion of this festivity, where many people were assembled, answered Mary, that she might do as she pleased, but that his time for going was not yet come; not giving her the least intimation of his design to procure a miraculous supply of wine to lengthen out the entertainment, as these learned gentlemen suppose he did. But Mary rightly imagined he had some particular reason for not going away with her, and, as she had more authority in the house than he had, that he might not be disappointed in his purpose, whatever it was, from the servants not paying proper attention to his orders, she told them to do whatsoever her son desired them. And they accordingly filled the water pots with water, when he desired them to do it.

Ghost the high priest's opinion delivered as a wicked politician, that it was better to put an innocent man to death than give occasion to that calamity which others of the council had expressed their apprehensions of, should Christ's doctrine be suffered to prevail, viz. that the Romans would come and take away their place and nation.

The remarks upon Judas's censure of Mary Magdeline's anointing Jesus's feet, imputed to John in the 6th verse of the xiith chapter, is also most injurious to the character of the beloved disciple. He is there made to call Judas *a thief*, although at the time the transaction happened, and for some time after, Judas appears to have been treated by Christ on the same footing with the other apostles, and no misconduct of any kind had been imputed to him ; and besides, the style and manner of the expression is utterly inconsistent with the whole of the writings of John, which breathe throughout a spirit of candour and benevolence. Indeed, I am inclined to think, that John wrote no more of the 4th verse than the words, *then said one of his disciples* ; and that the name of Judas, and what follows, was a marginal note, although I have not ventured so to place it.

I know it has been said, that as the evangelist wrote his gospel after Judas had, by his treachery, shewn himself to be a bad man, the evangelist had a just right to impute to him at the time he wrote the wicked motive he assigns for his pretended care of the poor. But this is, surely, a very uncandid way of judging, and very unlikely to be John's. He might as well have said of Peter, when he professed himself ready to die with Christ, that he said so to conceal his own cowardice by bold assertions, because he afterwards denied his master.

But what renders the interpolation of these marginal notes into the text the more insidious to the credit of all the gospels is, that they are supposed to speak the sentiments of the evangelists themselves.

And some of the notes will be found to militate as strongly against their judgment as against their learning, and tend to throw the heaviest imputations upon the truth of their relations. The poor apologies made for these erroneous comments only serve to render the imputation more grievous, by the uncertainty they charge upon the whole history. Some tell us the evangelists quoted the Hebrew, others the Samaritan, others the Septuagint

copies of the old testament. Some refer to the Chaldee paraphrasi; and, when all fail, they suppose copies which then existed, but are since lost. To obviate the whole of the charge, and restore to the evangelists that credit which they are so fully entitled to, of simple narrators of well attested facts, without introducing any comments or observations of their own, but merely (as the words of St. Luke already quoted, expresses it; to set in order those things which had *been delivered to them*, by those who were from the beginning eye witnesses and ministers of the word, of which he himself had had perfect understanding from the very first, to the end that Theophilus, the gentile convert, whom he addresses, might know the *certainty* of those things wherein he had been instructed;) I have ventured to remove from the texts several of the comments which I conceive to have been the marginal notes of Hebrew proselytes, upon their copies of the evangelist's narratives, and which were from thence introduced into the text by future transcribers.

But in respect to these interpolations, it is proper to observe, in justice to the evidence which we have of the purity and authenticity of the scriptures, that not one of those inter-

polations contains any fact, or is at all connected with the narrative; nor do they put any expressions into the mouth of Christ, and, therefore, *as far as the authenticity and purity of the history is concerned*, it is of no importance by whom the notes or comments which have been interpolated were made, or indeed whether they are removed out of the text, or suffered to remain in it. But I am fully persuaded, christianity will derive great advantage from the removal of these interpolations; for, when these notes are restored to the margin of the gospels, they will furnish new and important proofs of the authenticity of the gospels upon which they were made. I shall, therefore, without farther apology, present the reader with the text, freed from the marginal notes.

*Verses supposed to have been
marginal Notes inserted in
the Text.*

*The Text without the Verses
supposed to have been mar-
ginal Notes.*

St. MARK'S GOSPEL.

CHAP. VI.

Verse 52.

For they considered not the miracle of the loaves, for their heart was hardened.

Verse 51.

And he went up unto them into the ship, and the wind ceased, and they were fore amazed in themselves beyond measure.

Supposed Marginal Notes.

Text.

Verse 53.

And when they had passed over they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

CHAP. VII.

Verses 3 and 4.

For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the market, except they wash they eat not, and many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables.

Verse 2.

And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled; that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault.

Verse 5.

Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him, why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands.

CHAP. XVI.

Verse 19.

So when after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven,

Verse 19.

and sat on the right hand of God.

Verse 20.

And they went forth and preached every where.

St. MATHEW'S GOSPEL.

CHAP. I.

Supposed Marginal Notes.

Verses 22 and 23.

Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophets, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emanuel, which being interpreted is God with us.

Text.

Verse 21.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

Verse 24.

Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife.

CHAP. II.

Verse 14.

When he arose he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt,

Part of Verse 14.

and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Verse 16.

Then, Herod when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

Supposed Marginal Notes.

Text.

Verse 23.

that it might be fulfilled
which was spoken by the
prophets ; he shall be called a
Nazarine.

Verse 23.

And he came and dwelt in
a city called Nazareth,

CHAP. III.

Verse 3.

For this is he that was
spoken of by the prophet
Esaïas, saying, the voice of
one crying in the wilderness,
Prepare ye the way of the
Lord, make his paths straight.

Verses 1 and 2.

In those days came John
the Baptist preaching in the
wilderness of Judea, and say-
ing, repent ye, for the king-
dom of heaven is at hand.

Verse 4.

And the same John had
his raiment of camel's hair.

CHAP. IV.

Verses 14, 15, 16.

That it might be fulfilled
which was spoken by Esaïas
the prophet, saying, The
land of Zabulon, and the
land of Nephtalim, by the
way of the sea beyond Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles, the
people which sat in darkness
saw great light, and to them
which sat in the region and
shadow of death light is
sprung up.

Verse 13.

And leaving Nazareth he
came and dwelt at Caper-
naum, which is upon the sea
coast in the borders of Za-
bulon and Nephtalem.

Verse 17.

From that time Jesus be-
gan to preach, and to say,
Repent, for the kingdom of
heaven is at hand.

CHAP. VIII.

Supposed Marginal Notes.

Verse 17.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses.

Text.

Verse 16.

When the evening was come they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick.

Verse 18.

Now, when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

CHAP. XII.

Verses 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased; I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles; he shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the street; a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory, and in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

Verses 15 and 16.

And great multitudes followed, and he healed them all, and charged them that they should not make him known.

Verse 22.

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, and he healed him.

CHAP. XIII.

Supposed Marginal Notes.

Verse 35.

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

Text.

Verse 34.

All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them.

Verse 36.

Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house.

CHAP. XXI.

Verse 4 and 5.

All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, tell ye the daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh unto thee meek, and setting upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Verse 3.

And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say the Lord hath need of them, and straightway he will send them.

Verse 6.

And the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them.

CHAP. XXVI.

First part of Verse 56.

But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophet might be fulfilled.

Verse 55.

In that same hour said Jesus to the multitude, are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me; I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hand on me.

Latter part of Verse 65.

Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.

CHAP. XXVII.

Supposed Marginal Notes.

Verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,
and 10.

These verses appear as a paranthesis, but as they anticipate the whole of the transaction they relate, they could not have been written by the evangelist, but must have been a marginal note subsequently made. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, *when he saw that he was condemned*, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that, I have betrayed the innocent blood; and they said, what is that to us, see thou to that; and he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, it is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in; wherefore, that field

Text.

Verse 2.

And when they had bound him they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Verse 11.

And Jesus stood before the governor.

Supposed Marginal Notes.

was called the field of blood
unto this day. Then was
fulfilled that which was
spoken by Jeremy, the pro-
phet, saying: and they took
the thirty pieces of silver,
the price of him that was
valued, whom they of the
children of Israel did value,
and gave them for the pot-
ter's field, as the Lord ap-
pointed me.

St. JOHN'S GOSPEL.

CHAP. XI.

Verse 51 and 52.

And this spake he not of
himself; but being high
priest that year, he prophe-
sied, that Jesus should die
for that nation, and not for
that nation only, but that
also he should gather together
in one the children of God
that were scattered abroad.

Verse 49 and 50.

And one of them, named
Caiphas, being the high
priest that same year, said
unto them, ye know nothing
at all, nor consider that it is
expedient for us that one
man should die for the peo-
ple, and that the whole na-
tion perish not.

Verse 53.

Then from that day forth
they took counsel together
for to put him to death.

CHAP. XII.

Verse 6.

This he said, not that he
cared for the poor, but be-

Verses 4 and 5.

Then saith one of his
disciples, (Judas Iscariot,

Supposed Marginal Notes.

cause he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Verses 38, 39, 40, and 41.

That the saying of Esaias, the prophet, might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed. Therefore, they could not believe, because that Esaias had said again, he hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him.

CHAP. XVIII.

Verse 9.

That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake of them, which thou gavest me, have I lost none.

Verse 24.

Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiphas, the high

Text.

Simon's son, which should betray him,) why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?

Verse 7.

Then said Jesus, let her alone; against the day of my burial hath she done this.

Verse 37.

But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.

Verse 42.

Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.

Verse 8.

If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way.

Verse 10.

Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant.

Supposed Marginal Notes.

priest. [This note is misplaced, for it ought to have been added to the 13th verse, and would then, with the 14th, explain the text.] Now Caiphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Verse 32.

That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

There are several comments, or expositions, inserted in the text, marked as parenthesis, which would be placed more properly in the margin, as it is probable they originally were.

The 21st chapter is supposed to have been added to St. John's gospel, by the Ephesians, after John's death, but from the pre-eminence it gives to St. Peter, it is more probable that it was added much later. But wheresoever or by whomsoever it may have been added, it ought

Text.

Verse 23.

Jesus answered him, (the high priest Caiphas) if I have spoken evil bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou me.

Verse 25.

And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself.

Verse 31.

The Jews, therefore, said unto him, (Pilate) it is not lawful for us to put any man to death.

Verse 33.

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall, and called Jesus, and said unto him, art thou the king of the Jews?

not to remain where it is, and be imputed to that evangelist, for independent of all traditional doubts, it contains internal evidence that it was not written by him ; and more especially as St. John declares, in the 20th chapter, that he had *then* completed the purpose of writing his gospel, as he ends it with saying, that *many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book ; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.* Such, we are assured, was his purpose in writing it ; and when he tells us he had completed that purpose, it is to be concluded he meant to write no more. The fact appears to be, that after the claim of the bishop of Rome to pre-eminency was set up, his partizans thought it fit to make John assist him, by shewing Peter to be especially directed by Christ, to feed his sheep, by which they meant we should understand that he was to be considered as the representative of the chief shepherd, and to perform his office in his absence. Nothing short of factious presumption would have attempted such an imposition upon John, as to make him the author of Christ's preference of Peter, who had so recently denied and

abandoned him, to John, who had continued with him under all the trying circumstances of his apprehension, accusation, judgment, and crucifixion, and who was the only one of his disciples to whom he spoke from the cross, or who perhaps followed him to Calvary, and to whose care and protection he recommended his mother. Indeed it might be supposed that Peter felt so conscious of his own apostacy as to be ashamed and afraid of again joining the other ten, and the message of the angel by the women, as recorded by St. Mark, seems to have expected that he so felt; but at the same time that it supposes him to doubt of his being still at liberty to consider himself as included among Christ's disciples, it kindly removes his apprehensions, by naming him particularly. Tell his disciples *and Peter*, says the angel, intimating that though he had ceased to be a disciple, by denying his master, his repentance had done away his fault.

But although his benevolent master, who knew his penitence, was thus graciously pleased to pardon his apostacy, and receive him back among the number of his apostles, his example was surely not the most fit to be held up to the rest, to strengthen their faith, and excite them to perseverance in the cause they had espoused, and which was likely to expose

them to the severest calamities. Nor was it either just to the other ten, but more especially to John, or becoming the character of Jesus, as their common master, to repeatedly ask Peter, if he loved him *more* than the rest, when none but him had ever denied him; and John had never deserted him, as the question implies, that Jesus was not satisfied with the affection of *the rest*, and expected from Peter, a greater degree of attachment to his person, notwithstanding his recent apostacy, than from any of the others. Suppositions highly unfit to be imputed to Christ, and no less injurious to the beloved apostle, who they charge with having recorded them.*

Before I conclude this subject, I shall make some observations upon the greatly controverted 7th and 8th verses, in St. John's first general epistle. The first observation that occurs upon the perusal of these verses,

* I have met with a commentator, of considerable eminence, who, struck with the impropriety of supposing Christ to have expected Peter to feel more affection for him than the rest of his disciples, who were then present, whimsically conjectures, that the word, *these*, respects the fish that Peter had caught, and not the disciples; and that the question should be thus stated:—"Simon Peter, lovest thou me more than *these fish*, or than your occupation of a fisherman. If you do, quit it, and take up that of a preacher."

is, that nothing similar is to be found in any other part of the new Testament, so that it seems, the information respecting the deity contained in them, was not judged fitting to be revealed by Jesus Christ to his apostles while on earth ; nor does it appear that any of them, except John, had it communicated to him by the Holy Ghost, after Christ's ascension ; and even John himself was not possessed of it when he writ his gospel, fifty years after the descent of the Holy Ghost, as will appear from the several quotations I have already made from the new Testament, in proof of the faith required of a Christian. The next observation which presents itself is, that the apostle does not communicate the information these verses contain, as a *matter of faith*, to be believed by all Christian people, but merely as an historical fact ; for, says he, there are three, &c. which is wholly unaccountable, as the apostle must have been sensible at the time he was writing, that the notion of the deity he was then promulgating, was very different from what Christ had taught his disciples, and from what he himself had in his gospel recorded and declared the belief of to be necessary to salvation. Passing over, however, these two strong grounds of suspicion, which in any other case would be deemed sufficient to throw dis-

credit upon any passage imputed to an esteemed writer, much less an inspired apostle and evangelist, let us proceed to the examination of the verses themselves, and their connection with those which precede and follow them; and for the better understanding the subject, it will be proper to examine what appears to be the apostle's intention in writing that epistle; and fortunately he has expressly told it us himself, in the 1st verse of the 2nd chapter, and repeated it in the 13th verse of the 5th. *These things, says he, in the 1st, write I unto you, that ye sin not; and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ, the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins; and in the other, these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the son of God.* Are we then to look for, in this epistle, a declaration of a new and before unrevealed article of belief? Is there any intimation here, that the apostle was going to discover to us a mystery which had not been revealed by Christ or any other of his apostles; a mystery, the knowledge of which must induce Christians to conceive differently of the deity from which they before had done, by be-

lieving him to consist of a trinity in unity,
 and a unity in trinity? surely this cannot be
 supposed. Then let us examine the passage
 itself, and see how it is introduced. Chapter
 5, verse 5. *Who is he that overcometh the
 world*, says the apostle, *but he that believeth
 that Jesus is the SON of God*; this is surely
 declaring the belief of the *sonship* of Christ
 to be the *one thing needful*, in very express
 terms. But the apostle goes on, *this is he that
 came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not
 by water only, but by water and blood; and it
 is the spirit that beareth witness, because the spi-
 rit is truth*. Here then we see Christ is assert-
 ed to have come by water and blood, and that
 the spirit bears witness that he did so. His
 coming by water may be supposed to refer to
 his baptism by John, which was the baptism of
 repentance, a necessary qualification for initia-
 tion into Christ's religion, or, as the consecra-
 tion to his ministry, as the Jewish priests were
 consecrated to their ministry, by being bap-
 tized, and therefore Christ submitted to it, as
 to use his own reason, for doing so, it, *became
 him to fulfill all righteousness*; after which the
 Holy Ghost descended upon him, and anointed
 him with power to execute his ministry;
 and his coming by blood is evidently in-

tended to refer to his sufferings upon the cross; and that the sacrifice he then made of himself, for the sins of all men, was accepted by his heavenly father: *The spirit bore witness*: when, according to Christ's promise, he descended upon the apostles, and conferred on them the gift of tongues, and the power of working miracles.

Now let us pass on to the 9th verse, supposing it to be connected with the former, and leaving out the contested words. If, says the apostle, *we receive the witness of men* (as sufficient to establish any fact), *the witness of God is greater, for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.* He (the apostle goes on,) *that believeth on the son of God, hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave us of his son. And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his son; he that hath the son hath life, and he that hath not the son of God hath not life.* Here we see one continued argument to prove, that faith in Jesus Christ, as *only son of God*, is necessary to our salvation or eternal life, and the proper and certain means of obtaining it; and that God, by the evidences he

has given us by his holy spirit, in the public instances recorded in the gospels, as well as by his secret influence on our minds, has left us *no ground of doubt or disbelief*. For what purpose then, or with what view, could the apostle introduce the three witnesses in heaven, to convince men of this fact, when he had already asserted that the spirit had borne complete witness to it.

You, says the apostle, believe things on the testimony of men, but here is the testimony of God, given by his holy spirit, which is surely greater than that of men, and therefore ought to be believed. Why then make a further appeal to three witnesses in heaven, and three on earth, to the same purpose? The inconsistency in the apostle's argument, which this appeal occasions, and the want of connection with either the part of the argument which went before, or with that which follows is, *primæ faciæ* evidence of the interpolation: but still the words themselves are to be examined. Taking them then as they stand, between the 6th and 9th verses, the apostle, after saying, in the 6th, that it is the spirit that beareth witness, because the spirit is truth, is supposed to make this *inference* or deduction from what he had said, FOR, says he, *there are three that bare*

record or witnesses in heaven, the father, the word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. Now, in the name of common sense, how does this follow as an inference from what he had said before, viz. that it is the spirit that beareth witness; but what is the witness or record which these three bare in heaven; is it not, that Jesus Christ is the son of God? Is Christ then to be referred to as one of those three witnesses, when he himself expressly declares, that he *bears not witness of himself*. And to whom is this record or witness borne, for it is said to be borne by the three in heaven? The angels might be convinced by it, but how men on earth were to be the better for it, we are not told. But the contrast in the following verse of the three witnesses on earth, is more curious; for what are these three, the *spirit*, the *water*, and the *blood*; and these three are said to *agree in one*. Now, may we ask, what that *one* is, which these three agree in. Is it in one fact, and is that fact the same, which the three in heaven are said to record, or bare witness to, that Jesus Christ is the son of God? Then let us see in what way the water and the blood (we suppose it to be Christ's blood shed upon the cross, and perhaps the water too which issued along with it, that are meant,)

agree with the Holy Ghost, in witnessing Jesus Christ to be the son of God. The water and the blood, it must be allowed, are material, and inanimate substances; and what sort of witnesses they bare to any fact is not easily to be discovered; but here we find them coupled with the Holy Ghost to support and corroborate his testimony, as it should seem; so that the apostle, after representing the blessed spirit as joining with the father and the son to bare witnesses in heaven, is made to degrade him to earth, to bare witnesses to the *same fact*, in concurrence with two such corruptible and inanimate substances. But, after introducing this double witnesses of *three* in heaven, and three in earth, (not indeed of three *different* parties in each place, for the Holy Ghost is a party in both, so that there are in fact but five parties; and the annotator is not entitled to the prettiness of the conceit of comparing three in heaven, with three on earth,) we might suppose the apostle would have made use of *their* concurrent testimony, to strengthen his argument, but, on the contrary, he declines all support from them, and rests his whole doctrine upon the witnesses of God only.

For, says he, if we receive the witnesses of man, the witness of God is greater, for this is

the witness of God which he hath testified of his son; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his son. These things, concludes the apostle, have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the son of God. There can, therefore, be no doubt that these verses are the marginal note of some zealous partizan of the new doctrine.

I have said, that by freeing the text from the interpolated marginal notes I have pointed out, and restoring them to their original and proper place in the margin, some fresh proofs of the authenticity of the gospels themselves might be discovered, of which I shall now give some instances. The note which I have taken out of the text of the 6th of St. Mark, and restored it to the margin, informs the reader of the ordinary custom of the Jews in their frequent washings, which information could not be intended for the Hebrew converts in Palestine, where the gospel was written and published, but was evidently written by one of them for the information of the Gentile converts. Now, as it is written in the present tense, as respecting customs *which*

were then practised, it must have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews, and is, therefore, a proof that the copy of the gospel on which it was written had been made before those events, and transmitted out of Palestine to some of the convert Gentile churches. The same observation may be made upon the marginal note, most idly interpolated into St. John's gospel, where the high priest is said to have denounced judgment of death upon Christ, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This blasphemous note could have been only made by a Jewish convert, who believed in the inspiration of the Jewish high priest, and at a time too when the office of a high priest was in every one's recollection—very soon after the destruction of the temple.

The words, *whoso readeth, let him understand*, in the 15th verse of the 24th chapter of Matthew, and the words, *let him that readeth understand*, in the 15th verse of the 13th chapter of Mark, cannot have been the words of Christ, as he was not *writing*, nor *directing* any one to write what he was then speaking, but as the apostles, to whom he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, rightly conceived it to be highly necessary to make the disciples

acquainted with the prophecy, and for that purpose they made a minute of it, and sent copies about among them, they added those words, *let him that readeth understand*, in the margin, as an incitement to the disciples to give attention to the prophecy, and to prepare themselves to act accordingly, as we are told they did. These words, therefore, placed in the margin, as they contain internal evidence, that they were not spoken by Christ, so do they prove the existence of the prophecy before the destruction of Jerusalem, and to have been added as a warning from the apostles to the disciples, before that event came to pass. And what is a corroborating proof of this fact, is, that Luke has not those words, although he relates the prophecy in nearly the same terms as Matthew and Mark; for as he compiled and published his gospel at Rome, the insertion of such words there could be of no use to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and they were altogether inapplicable to the people of Rome. Of this most remarkable prophecy John takes no notice, which is very strong evidence of the originality and authenticity of the other three gospels, as well as of his own, for it shews that his was written *after* the prediction was ac-

complished, and therefore his quoting it would have been no proof of the prescience of Christ; whereas the mention of it by each of the others shews their gospels to have been written *before* the events foretold had come to pass. I have observed that from verse 3d, to verse the 11th, of the 27th chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, appears to be an addition, by way of parenthesis, though originally a marginal note; and when it is so placed, it will afford a convincing proof that the gospel, upon which that note was made, was in existence before the destruction of Jerufalem; for it tells us that the name of the potter's field was changed to that of the field of blood, and *so continued to be called to this day*, viz. the time when that note was written. Now we are well assured that when Jerufalem was destroyed, *that field* was filled with rubbish, and could no more be distinguished among the ruins.

Throughout this investigation, I have relied intirely upon the evidence afforded by the sacred writings themselves, in their plain and obvious meaning, for, as they were undoubtedly written for the instruction of all mankind, in all ages of the world, we have just reason to expect they contain such proofs of the divine origin of the doctrine they inculcate, as is suf-

ficient to convince every man of common un-
 derstanding, that they disclose the will and
 mind of God ; and I confess, I do not con-
 ceive their doctrine either stands in need of, or
 can derive much elucidation or support from
 traditional expositions, especially when it is
 considered what contaminating hands ecclesi-
 astical traditions have passed through ; and the
 observation made by St. Jerom, so many cen-
 turies ago, appears to be equally applicable to
 all other times, viz. “ that it is wont to befall
 “ the most part of learned men, that it is
 “ harder to understand their expositions than
 “ the thing which they go about to expound.”

Of the Notion of the Almighty Father, his only Son, and Holy Spirit; deducible from the Holy Scriptures.

CHAP. III.

THE truth and purity of the records that are come down to us of the several revelations of the divine will, which have been made to men in the different ages of the world, being fully admitted, it becomes our duty to enquire, what are the discoveries they make to us of the supreme being, and what notion they instruct us to conceive of his eternal word and only son, the promised Messiah? To render a matter of such high importance perfectly clear and certain, it will be proper to collect together, and place under one point of view, the several declarations God has been pleased to make of himself to the Antediluvians, and the Patriarchs, to the Israelites, by Moses and the Prophets, and to the whole world, by his blessed son, Jesus Christ, and his

apostles, inspired by the Holy Ghost ; for as I have already said in my former publications, and it cannot be too often repeated, although God has been pleased at the later periods to make more ample declarations of his divine will, than he had thought fit or necessary in the former ages of the world, yet the notion which all his revelations inculcate of himself must have been the same, inasmuch as he is the God of truth, and immutable ; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; the El Eloim or God of Gods, of Noah and the Antideluvians ; the El Shaddai, or the Almighty God ; the Almighty Preserver of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; the Jehova, or Being of Moses and the prophets ; and the Lord of heaven and earth ; the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. I shall first collect the several declarations he has made of himself, and the notions which the Antideluvians and Patriarchs appear to have entertained of him ; and, secondly, collect the declarations he has made of himself to Moses, and by Moses and the prophets to the Israelites ; and, thirdly, to all mankind, by his only Son Jesus Christ.

To the Antideluvians and Patriarchs.

Genesis, ch. iii. v. 9. And the Lord God called unto Adam.

ch. iv. v. 3, 4. Adam, Cain, and Abel brought offerings unto the Lord.

v. 8, 28. And Noah builded an altar unto the

v. 9, 1. Lord, and offered burnt offerings, and God blessed Noah.

v. 18, 8. And Abraham builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.

v. 14, 19, 22. Melchisedec said, blessed be Abram, of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; and Abram said, I have lift up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth.

v. 24, 3. And Abram said, I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth.

ch. xxvi. v. 24, 25. And the Lord appeared unto Isaac at Beersheba, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father.

And Isaac built an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord.

ch. xxviii. v. 13. And behold the Lord stood above the ladder, and said to Jacob, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac.

ch. xxxv. v. 9, 11. And God appeared unto Jacob at Bethel, and said, I am God Almighty.

*To Moses, and by Moses and the Prophets to the
Israelites.*

Exodus, ch. iii. v. 14, 15. And God said unto Moses, I am, that I am, thus shalt thou say the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, this is my name, for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

ch. vi. v. 2, 3, and 7. And God spake unto Moses and said, I am the Lord; I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah, was I not known unto them, and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God.

ch. xv. v. 1. and 2. Then sang Moses and the Israelites unto the Lord, the Lord is my strength and my song, he is become my salvation, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

ch. xx. v. 1. And God spake these words, and said, I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Deuteronomy, ch. iv. v. 35. Unto thee it was shewed that thou mightest know that the

Lord he is God, there is none else beside him.

ch. vi. v. 4, and 5. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy

ch. x. v. 12, 14, and 17. And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also with all that therein is, for the Lord your God is God of Gods and Lord of Lords.

Psalms, ch. viii. v. 1. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, thou hath set thy glory above the heavens.

ch. xviii. v. 31. For who is God, save the Lord, or who is a rock, save our God.

ch. xix. v. 1. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy works,

Isaiah, ch. xii. v. 2. Behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song.

Isaiah, ch. xxvi. v. iv. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

ch. xlii. v. 5, and 8. Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, he that spread forth the earth; and that which cometh out of it, he that giveth bread to the people and spirit to them that walketh therein, I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory I will not give to another.

ch. xliii. v. 12. 13. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord (Jehovah) that I am God, yea before the day was I am he.

ch. xlv. v. 5. Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else.

Jer. ch. xxiii. v. 23, 36. Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God a far off. Ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of hosts our God.

Micah. ch. vi. v. 8. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

By Jesus Christ, as recorded in the Four Gospels.

St. Matthew, ch. v. Let your light so shine before men
v. 5, 16, 17, 44, 45. that they may see your good works,

St. Matthew, ch. v. and glorify your father which is in
v. 15, 16, 44, 45. heaven.

Love your enemies that ye may be
the children of your father which is
in heaven, for he maketh his sun to
rise on the evil and on the good, and
sendeth rain on the just and on the
unjust.

Swear not by heaven, for it is God's
throne, nor by the earth, for it is his
footstool.

ch. vi. v. 9, 24, 33. After this manner pray ye. Our fa-
ther which art in heaven.

Matthew, ch. 19. v. 17. There is none good but one, that is
God.

ch. xxii. v. 31, 37. Have ye not read that which was
spoken unto you by God, saying,
I am the God of Abraham, the
God of Isaac, and the God of Ja-
cob.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
with all thy heart, and with all thy
soul, and with all thy mind; this
is the first and great commandment.

St. Mark, ch. xi. v. 22. Jesus said, have faith in God.

ch. xii. v. 29. The first of all the commandments
is, hear, O Israel, the Lord our
God is one Lord.

St. Luke, ch. iv. v. 8. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy
God, and him only shalt thou serve.

The foregoing collection of texts, it must
be allowed, contain complete evidence, that the

God whom Jesus Christ instructed his disciples to acknowledge and adore, under the endearing name of their Heavenly Father, is no other than the El Eloim, or God of Gods, of the Antideluveans; the El Shaddac, or Almighty God, of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and the Jehovah, I am, or the being of Moses and the Prophets; proceed we now, therefore, to prove in like manner, from the communications God has made to men, that Jesus Christ is the eternal *word*, the only son of God, and the promised Messiah, and restorer of mankind.

To the Antideluveans and Patriarchs.

Genesis, ch. iii. v. 15. The woman's seed, shall bruise thy head, (the serpent's)

ch. xxii. v. 18. In thy seed (Abraham's) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

Genesis, ch. xlix. v. 10. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

By Moses and the Prophets.

Deuteronomy, ch. xviii. The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me unto him ye shall hearken, according

to all that thou desired'st of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more. And the Lord said unto me, they have well spoken, I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

Psalms, ii. v. 7, and 8. I will declare the decree the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee, ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

xxxiii v. 6. By the *word* of the Lord were the heavens made.

Isaiah, vii. v. 14. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.

ch. ix. v. 6. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called wonderful counsellor, the mighty God, the

everlasting father, the prince of peace.

ch. ix. v. 6. The voice of him that cryeth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert an highway for our God.

The whole of the 53d. chapter is so very descriptive of Christ's sufferings and death, that it alone contains sufficient evidence that he was the Messiah. I shall therefore only refer to it, and not increase the bulk of this publication by copying it.

Micah, ch. v. v. 2. Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Daniel, ch. ix. v. 24, 25, and 26. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (said the angel to Daniel) and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.

From the going forth of the commandment, to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the

prince shall be seven weeks and three-score and two weeks.

And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.

By Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

St. Matthew records Christ to have said to his disciples,

ch. v. Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. All things are delivered unto me of my father, and no man knoweth the son but the father, neither knoweth any man the father save the son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him.

Matthew, ch. xvi. v. 13. Christ saith unto them, whom say ye that I am? and Simon Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

ch. xxvii. v. 18, 19. Christ said, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

ch. x. v. 21, 22. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O father, Lord of heaven and earth.

All things are delivered to me of my father.

St. John, speaking in his own person, though by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, makes the following declarations:—

St. John, ch. i. v. 1, 2, In the beginning was the *word*, and
3, 4, 10, 14. the *word* was with God, and the
word was God, the same was in the
beginning with God.

All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. He was in the world, and the world was made by him. And the *word* was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory. The glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth.

ch. iii. v. 18. 36. He that believeth on the son is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.

He that believeth on the son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

St. John, ch. iv. v. 26. I, said Jesus (to the Samaritan woman) that spake unto thee am he (the Messiah.)

ch. v. v. 20, 22, 23. The father loveth the son and sheweth him all things, and hath committed all judgment unto the son, that all men should honor the son even as they honor the father; he that honoreth not the son, honoreth not the father which hath sent him.

ch. vi. v. 29, 38, For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me, and this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the son and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him at the last day.

ch. v. v. 24, 25, 26. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God, and they that hear shall live.

For as the father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment, also because he is the son of man.

ch. viii. v. 54. It is my father that honoreth me, of whom you say that he is your God.

ch. ix. v. 35. And when Jesus had found him (the man who was born blind) he said unto him, doth thou believe on the son of God, he answered and said who is he, Rabbi, that I might believe on him? and Jesus said unto

him thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

ch. xi. v. 26, 27. (Jesus said to Mary) whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die, believest thou this; she (Mary) saith unto him, Lord I believe that thou art Christ, the son of God, that should come into the world.

ch. xiv. v. 1, 2, 13. (Jesus said) ye believe in God, believe also in me, in my father's house are many mansions, and whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the father may be glorified in the son.

ch. xvi. v. 2, 3, 9, 27. Whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my name, he will give it you.

For the father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

ch. xvii. v. 1, 2, 3. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, father the hour is come, glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee, as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him, and this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

ch. xx. v. 17, 30. Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my father and your father, and to my God and your God.

ch. xx. v. 17, 30. These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing ye might have life in his name.

Agreeably to all which we find the apostles, in their solemn address to God, recorded in the 4th chapter of the Acts, calling *Jesus the holy Child of God*, and preaching Christ *to be the Son of God*, as St. Paul is recorded to have done, in the 9th chap. and 20th verse; and requiring belief that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, as the qualification for baptism, as Philip did in the case of the eunuch. St. Paul also says of himself, in his epistle to the Galatians, chap. 2, and verse 20, *That the life which he now lives in the flesh he lives by the faith in the Son of God*, and he testifies to the Philipians, chap. 2, verse 11, that the scheme of our redemption was so ordered, *that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father*; and to the Thessalonians, chap. 1, verse 8, 9, and 10, he boasts that *they turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, which delivered us from wrath to come*; for, says he, in his first epistle to the

Corinthians, chap. 8, verse 6, *To us there is but one God, the Father of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.*

St. John in his first general epistle tells us Christians, that *our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ.* That the blood of Jesus Christ the son of God cleanseth us from all sin ; that God sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins ; that the father sent the son to be the saviour of the world, and to conclude all, he testifies that, *whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God, and he declares it to be the purpose of the epistle, which it appears was written several years after the promulgation of the gospels of St. Matthew, Mark, and Luke ; that those who believe on the name of the son of God, might know that they had eternal life.*

Thus have I shewn that we have a plain, consistent, and uniform notion of the one infinite, eternal, and incomprehensible Being, inculcated by God himself, in the several communications he has thought fit to make to mankind, from the beginning of the world, and likewise of the eternal existence of his word or son, by whom he made all things, and who appeared upon

earth as a man, the Messiah, to complete the revelation of his father's will to men! to make atonement for their transgressions, to restore them to a capacity for immortality, under the conditions of the new covenant he had made for them! to guide them into all truth, and to be the means of blessing and happiness to the whole human race. Conformable to this notion of the eternal father, and of his eternal son, thus inculcated by divine revelation; the creed, which is called the apostles, from its being composed in or near the apostles time, appears to have been framed, as in its original state, it ended with the words, *I believe in the Holy Ghost*, and had neither a declaration that Christ descended into hell, nor a belief in the holy catholic church, or in the communion of saints, or in the forgiveness of sins, by the said holy catholic church; and it is a melancholy reflection, that the greatest part of the numerous and wide spread calamities which the professors of Christianity have inflicted upon each other, have had their source in the departure from the simplicity of that creed, and the super-addition of scholastic or metaphysical dogma. And I trust that the Christian world is now so enlightened, and the rulers of the several churches, especially our own, so thoroughly

fenfible of the mischievous effects of these super-additions, that they will heartily concur in a plan for removing them, and thereby restoring the Christian profession of faith, to its original simplicity.

The Notion of the original State and present Condition of Man ; deducible from the Scriptures.

CHAP. IV.

FROM the view I have taken of the several records of the different communications of the divine will, made to man, and of the notion we are thereby authorized and enjoined to entertain of the Deity, we may, without much industry, collect what are the duties of men to their Creator, and to one another ; but the original state of man at his creation, and his present condition, are things not so readily perceived. But having shewn in the former treatise that the natural wants of man at his first creation, and his physical inability to supply them, or even to preserve his own existence, rendered the supernatural assistance, we are told was afforded him, absolutely necessary, and from thence adduced what must be allowed to be an incontrovertible argument in support of the veracity of the Mosaic account, of the manner in which he was assisted in his bodily wants, I shall con-

fine the present enquiry to his *moral* state, as a free, and therefore accountable agent; and as I have in the appendix to my former publication given a full exposition of the Eucharist, which is one of the two sacraments adopted by the church of England, and declared in the Catechism to be generally necessary to salvation, I shall, in the course of the present investigation, consider the nature and end of the other sacrament, baptism, which is not only declared to be also generally necessary to our salvation in one part of the Catechism, but in another to be so essential to it, that whereas *we are born in sin, and the children of wrath*, we are thereby made the children of grace, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

To account for the introduction of moral evil into the world, has employed the wit of men in all ages, but it is one of those subjects which is beyond the reach of reason, and its origin can only be discovered from the divine communications made to man; and there we find it clearly expressed, that Lucifer, or the devil, was the author and first introducer of it, by seducing our first parents to disobey the divine command; but still our enquiries will not be satisfied, unless we can make some discoveries respecting *him*, which may serve to

explain how he, an angel in heaven, became the author of evil upon earth.

As I have already attempted this in my *Observations upon the Liturgy*, some time since published, and I have had the satisfaction to hear my hypothesis approved of by some of our most eminent divines, I will here quote from that treatise what I have said upon the subject ; and I do it the more freely, as I understand the treatise is now out of print.

“ Why it has always been taken for granted
 “ that the angel’s apostacy preceded man’s
 “ creation I cannot conceive, for there is no
 “ warrant for it from scripture, and therefore
 “ I shall take the liberty to suppose it did not,
 “ and I think I have the authority of David
 “ and St. Paul on my side. The former says
 “ of man to God : ‘ Thou madest him a little
 “ lower than the angels ;’ and St. Paul re-
 “ peats David’s words in his epistle to the
 “ Hebrews : ‘ But if angels had fallen before
 “ man was made, it could not have been said
 “ with truth by either, that man was made a
 “ little lower than them. But, besides, St.
 “ Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians, directly
 “ asserts man’s superiority to the fallen an-
 “ gels, by saying : ‘ Do ye not know that the
 “ saints shall judge the world ; and know ye

“ not that we shall judge angels.’ That an-
 “ gels are free agents, and that God knows
 “ their thoughts, are positions which will
 “ readily be granted, that he therefore knew
 “ those whose exaltation had destroyed that
 “ humility which had entitled them to it,
 “ and raised in them ideas of their own merit
 “ and services, which rendered them un-
 “ worthy of the stations they filled, must be
 “ allowed.—Expulsion, or annihilation, it was
 “ certainly in God’s power to have inflicted,
 “ but how then could his justice have been
 “ manifested to the whole creation, or even to
 “ the sufferers themselves? Their obedience
 “ and submission were therefore to be put to
 “ the test, and the trial must be such as would
 “ be consistent with his goodness and justice
 “ to propose, and, at the same time, leave the
 “ delinquents without cause for their failure.

“ What service, what duty, then, can we
 “ imagine the all-perfect Being to require of
 “ his angels that could afford such a trial?
 “ Neither his justice nor his goodness could
 “ suggest one which the angels should per-
 “ ceive to be too difficult to be executed by
 “ the powers they possessed; nor indeed could
 “ it be supposed that the Omnipotent would
 “ not endue them with sufficient strength to

“ execute his own commands ; and his wis-
 “ dom, could not suggest one so derogatory
 “ of that order which himself had established
 “ among them, as might shock their pride in
 “ its execution ; a *speculative* proposition seems
 “ therefore the only mode free of objection,
 “ and this the creation of a new order of
 “ beings, by the Son of God, very naturally
 “ furnished. As we must suppose that the
 “ portions of the divine prescience distributed
 “ among intelligent creatures is according to
 “ their stations and degrees of perfection, it
 “ will follow, that the prescience of angels is
 “ much beyond ours, and that among them
 “ the archangels transcends that of the inferior
 “ orders. Now, as the leader of the *angels*
 “ *who kept not their first estate* is represented to
 “ have been of the highest order in heaven, it
 “ might please the Almighty to permit him,
 “ and the other angels, to acquire, at the time
 “ of man’s creation, such a prescience of his
 “ destination, and of the fact of the future ex-
 “ altation of his nature, without the manner of
 “ it, as should furnish matter of speculation,
 “ and trial of obedience and submission to the
 “ divine will, to Lucifer, and the heavenly
 “ hosts ; and no subject can be imagined more
 “ apt to alarm the pride, and excite indigna-

“ tion in a haughty archangel, than the ap-
 “ prehension of seeing a new creature so
 “ much his inferior in all respects, exalted
 “ above him ; and his pride being hurt, would
 “ set his ingenuity to work to devise means to
 “ prevent the intended indignity to himself
 “ and his companions. To oppose by force the
 “ will of the Almighty, or of his Son, they
 “ must have known to be vain, and therefore
 “ to circumvent his purpose by stratagem
 “ must have been their only hope ; and what
 “ method more practicable could their imagi-
 “ nation suggest, than the misleading the new
 “ creature, and causing him to offend his Maker,
 “ as that must effectually prevent *his* future
 “ exaltation ? With this intent Lucifer came
 “ down to Eden, or as St. Paul expresses it,
 “ left his own habitation in that shape which
 “ the other angels appeared in to Adam,
 “ which was that of a flying dragon or ser-
 “ pent, as the cherubim is represented, sur-
 “ rounded with the Sheckena, or luminous ray,
 “ which always attended the heavenly visitors.
 “ To such appearances Eve was accustomed,
 “ as well as to their voice, and as she rightly
 “ conceived Lucifer to be one of the heavenly
 “ host, and a messenger from the most high,
 “ she naturally gave ear to what he told her,

“ and submitted her own conception of God’s
 “ command to the high authority of this
 “ heavenly expositor, or as she told her tale
 “ to God, with that simplicity which never
 “ accompanies turpitude of heart, *the serpent*
 “ *beguiled her, and she did eat.* And it may
 “ be supposed it is to this deception which our
 “ Saviour alludes, when he says, the devil was
 “ *a liar from the beginning* (of the world),
 “ *that he is a liar, and the father of it.* Her
 “ declaration to Adam, that an archangel had
 “ assured her that God would not punish them
 “ with death for eating the apple, but that it
 “ would make them Eloims, like the chiefs of
 “ the heavenly host, and superior in wisdom to
 “ the highest of them, accounts for his ready
 “ acceptance of the fatal present, and his partici-
 “ pation in her crime. Here then the day spring
 “ from on high breaks in upon us, with its re-
 “ fulgent light, displaying before our eyes the
 “ whole of the wonderful scheme of the di-
 “ vine economy, in the amazing business of
 “ man’s creation, fall, and redemption ; for
 “ here we see the *pride* of Lucifer, which we
 “ are assured was the occasion of his apostacy,
 “ exciting him to oppose the divine will. We
 “ see the reason for his undertaking the seduc-
 “ tion of our first parents ; we find an excuse for

“ *their* violation of God’s command, which re-
 “ moves the charge of voluntary disobedience
 “ and disbelief, and renders them the objects
 “ of his mercy and compassion ; while the in-
 “ solent presumption of Lucifer, and his con-
 “ federates, render them for ever obnoxious
 “ to the divine displeasure, and exclude them
 “ from all title to favour and forgiveness.
 “ The deceived and seduced are always con-
 “ sidered as entitled to pity amongst men,
 “ while the deceiver and seducer is ever the
 “ object of resentment, and detestation. Lu-
 “ cifer indeed, we may suppose, returned
 “ home full of joy and self-gratulation, to re-
 “ ceive the applauses of his associates ; but the
 “ vengeance of the Almighty soon followed
 “ him ; and those of the heavenly host, who,
 “ confiding in the divine justice and goodness,
 “ held fast their integrity, and submitted
 “ themselves to his most holy will, were sent
 “ to execute the high behest. And now com-
 “ menced that war in heaven which Milton so
 “ gloriously describes, and which ended in the
 “ victory of the faithful host over the rebel-
 “ lious and desperate band, whose defeat our
 “ Saviour himself tells us he was witness to,
 “ when he says, he saw *Lucifer fall like light-*
 “ *ening from heaven.*

“ But although the delusion under which our
 “ first parents offended, served to extenuate
 “ their crime in the sight of their merciful cre-
 “ ator, his justice required that they should for-
 “ feit the reward of their obedience, which was
 “ immortality, or a progressive exultation from
 “ one state of happiness to another, through an
 “ endless existence ; for as nothing contami-
 “ nated with guilt can enter the kingdom of hea-
 “ ven, to fit us for exultation thither, we must
 “ not only be pardoned but renovated ; our
 “ souls must be washed, and our bodies purified.
 “ The blood of Christ does the one, and death
 “ and the grave perform the other ; and thus
 “ death and the grave, to which our offence
 “ made us subject, become the gate of heaven,
 “ and the passage to everlasting happiness ;
 “ well then may every Christian cry out with
 “ the apostle in exultation over them, *O death,*
 “ *where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy*
 “ *victory ?* ”

Whether any alteration took place in the
 organization of the human frame, in conse-
 quence of Adam's transgression, and whether
 his posterity became more liable to form
 erroneous judgments on that account, is not
 to be discovered by any thing in the history.
 So much, however, we may fairly deduce from

what is told us, that Adam was created in full stature, and in the full possession of all his mental powers ; that he was neither misled by vicious education or example, nor was his reason perverted, or his judgment biased by wicked associates, as is too often the case with his unfortunate descendants. Yet he voluntarily disobeyed the will of his creator, plainly and expressly revealed, and offended in almost the only circumstance in which he had the power to transgress. How he conducted himself, after his expulsion from Eden, we are not told, but if we may judge from the violent, proud, and revengeful temper of Cain, which hurried him on to perpetrate the murder of his brother, the father did not cultivate the minds of his children with much attention, nor teach them to govern their passions and subdue their sentiments, duties which are required of the parent in the present state of the world.

Adam's nature, therefore, does not appear, from any thing that can be collected, from the Mosaic account, to have been more perfect than our's at this day. He had free will, and so have we ; he abused it by disobeying the will of his creator, and we do no more ; he was created with a capacity for an immortal duration, which he forfeited by his disobe-

dience ; and we, being his descendants, brought into existence, subsequent to that forfeiture, came into the world in the state to which his disobedience had reduced him, which was that of a temporary being, and have therefore, as his descendants, no claim to immortality. That the forfeiture of immortality, and the consequent cessation of life, when the period allotted for existence in this world is fulfilled, was the only effect of Adam's transgression, is fully proved by that truly pious divine, Dr. Sherlock, who, in his excellent treatise upon death, shews it to have been St. Paul's opinion, as well as his own. " The sentence of " death and mortality," says he, " which was " pronounced on Adam, fell on all his poste- " rity. St. Paul tells us, 1st, Corinthians chap. " 15, v. 21, 22, *that by man, came death,* " *and in Adam all die* ; which he does not only " assert, but prove, Romans 5, 12, 13, " 14, *Wherefore by man sin entered into* " *the world, and death by sin, and so death* " *passed upon all, for that all have sinned ; for* " *until the law, sin was in the world, but sin* " *is not imputed where there is no law ; never-* " *theless death reigned from Adam until Moses,* " *even over them, who had not sinned after the* " *similitude of Adam's transgression.* The de-

“ sign of all which is to prove, that men *die* or are
 “ *mortal*, not for their own sins, but for the
 “ sins of Adam, which the apostle proves by
 “ this argument, because though all men as
 “ well as Adam have sinned, yet till the giv-
 “ ing the law of Moses, there was no law
 “ which threatened *death* against sin, but only
 “ that law given to Adam in Paradise, which
 “ no man else ever did, or ever could trans-
 “ gress but he. Now sin is not imputed to any
 “ man to *death* before there is any law which
 “ threatens *death* against it; upon what ac-
 “ count then, says the apostle, could these men
 “ *die* who lived between Adam and Moses, be-
 “ fore the law was given which threatens
 “ *death*? And yet die they did, even those who
 “ had not sinned after the similitude of
 “ Adam’s transgression. This could have been
 “ for no sin, but Adam’s, who sinned *and*
 “ *brought death into the world, and so death*
 “ *passed upon all men*. To hinder this from
 “ seeming hard, he shews that all men are,
 “ through their bodies, naturally mortal; that
 “ they held *immortality only on such terms as*
 “ *God was pleased to bestow it*; that they *for-*
 “ *feited* that tenure by the transgression of
 “ their common parent and representative;
 “ and, that as Adam, now *corrupt*, could beget

“ none but *corrupt* children, *immortality* be-
 “ came here unreasonable, and *impossible*,
 “ through the universal prevalence of sin.”

I shall only observe, upon this reasoning of the great divine, that the death to which he says Adam subjected his posterity, is simply a privation of life, or a loss of immortality, and has no reference whatever to a future state of punishment, or to the continuence of existence in another mode, for the purpose of being tormented; nor does the *corruption* which he says Adam intailed upon his children, refer to any *mental depravity*, but merely to the state of the body, which has a natural tendency to *corruption or putrefaction*. In this sense, therefore, and in this sense only, can we be said to be the *children of wrath*, inasmuch as we come into the world, subject to the forfeiture incurred by our first parent, of a capacity for immortality, through successive stages of progressive perfection. The 8th article of the church of England, therefore, which says, that the *nature* of every man of the offspring of Adam, born into this world, deserveth God's wrath and damnation, has no foundation in scripture; nor does it follow, that the baptism of infants is essential to their salvation; from the scrap of a verse in the

give to Christ that *incorruptible nature*, but

Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, chap. 2, v. 3, (which was all that the industrious Lewis could find to give countenance to the doctrine of the article,) when, the context is considered with it, for it shews the apostle to have had no such meaning, but that by the word *nature*, he intends only the effects of early vices and inveterate habits; as in another place he imputes to *nature* the effect of virtuous education, and early habits of acting *justly*; if, says he, *the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law*, now if by *nature* is here to be understood the disposition with which we are born, then will not such natural disposition in the Gentiles to observe the precepts of the law, be utterly inconsistent with the natural depravity of all other men, and with their (the Gentiles) being born in sin, children of wrath, and deserving God's wrath and damnation. But what puts the apostle's meaning out of all doubt, is the use he makes of the word *nature*, in his epistle to the Galatians: we, he says, in the 15th verse of the 2d chapter, who are Jews by *nature*, for surely no man can be said to be by nature of any sect, religion, or nation, if by nature is meant his physical composition, formed in the womb of his mother; nor could

any infant be said to be born a Jew, that is a professor of Judaism, although his parents were Jews; but Paul being born of Jewish parents, and by them brought up in the Jewish religion, from his childhood, and living in the constant habit of obedience to it, without any great violence to the word, calls himself a Jew *by nature*.

The framers of the 39 Articles, seem to have been aware of the difficulty their adoption of this doctrine would throw in the way of the complete incarnation of Christ, for in their 15th article they say “ Christ, in *the truth of our nature*, was made like unto us in all things “ (sin only excepted) from which he was “ clearly void, both in *his flesh* and in his “ spirit; he came to be the lamb without spot, “ and sin was not in him.” This is, however, to evade the difficulty, not to meet or obviate it, for by the words *the truth of our nature*, they seem to intend we should understand them to mean, that the nature Christ took was that which Adam had *before* his transgression, and consequently before it was contaminated; and, therefore, that he was clearly void of sin both in *his flesh* and in his spirit; as, however, the Virgin Mary, of *whose substance he was made man*, had not the good fortune to be born of Adam, *before* his transgression, she could not give to Christ that incamminated nature, but

such as she herself possessed, as the descendant of Adam, *after* his transgression; and being therefore *born in sin*, and consequently deserving (according to the former article,) God's wrath and damnation, Christ must have either taken her nature, such as it was, corrupt and depraved, or he must have been miraculously exempt from its degeneracy, and infirmities. If the former was the case, he was equally with his mother, *born in sin, and a child of wrath*; if on the other hand, he was miraculously exempt from the infirmities of *her* nature, he could not be *perfect man*. Two whole natures, united in one Christ, and consequently would have been unfit to be the propitiation for men. Such are the absurdities which the adoption of this impious doctrine leads to.

That Christ, though he took upon him our flesh, and was perfect man, was wholly without sin, we have the authority of all the apostles, but none of them tell us he was particularly exempt from the contamination of Adam's transgression, for the odious doctrine of the transmission of Adam's sin, to all his posterity, had not then been invented. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, says, "we have not a high priest
" which cannot be touched with the feeling of
" our infirmities, but was in all points *tempted*

“ like as we are, *yet without sin*; and St. Peter
 “ declares, that he *did no sin*, neither was guile
 “ found in his mouth; and St. John reminds us,
 “ that Christ was manifested to take away our
 “ sins, *and that in him is no sin* ;” by all which
 it is clear *actual sin* is meant, and no reference
 whatever made to hereditary contamination.
 And St. John, in his first epistle, is so far from
 countenancing this doctrine of the contamina-
 tion of the human nature, that he authora-
 tively pronounces every spirit that confesseth
 that Jesus Christ is “ come in *the flesh*, to be
 “ of God; and that every spirit that confesseth
 “ not that Jesus Christ is come in the *flesh*, is not
 “ of God;” without any exception of the con-
 taminated condition of *that flesh*, or reference
 to the *truth of its nature*, as it was before
 Adam’s transgression, which he certainly
 would have done if he had conceived or intend-
 ed we should conceive that the *flesh* Christ
 took was in any respect different from our *flesh*;
 and St. Peter, in the first chapter of his general
 Epistle, after exhorting Christians to be holy
 in all manner of conversation, as he which
 hath called them is holy, adds, in the 18th
 verse, this reason: forasmuch, says he, as ye
 know that ye were not redeemed with cor-
 ruptible things, as silver and gold, *from your*

vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ. The redemption, therefore, which Christ's blood procured for them, was not from the sins of Adam, or of their fathers, but from their own *vain conversation*, received indeed by tradition, from their fathers, but not inherited by nature for them.

As we have now seen how very slender authority there is for the doctrine of original guilt and depravity, inherited from Adam, we might consider it as a fair inference, that we are not *born in sin*; but as our church, in the Catechism, has thought fit to assert, that we are *born in sin*, as well as *by nature the children of wrath*, I have taken the pains to search the whole scripture for that expression, and I have found it only in two places; the one where the Jewish rulers tell the man who was born blind, whom Christ had made to see, that he was *altogether born in sin*, meaning agreeable to their opinion of the metempsychosis, that he was punished for the sins of his forefather; and the other, where David, in the hyperbolical language of poetry, says, he *was born in sin*, and *in iniquity had his mother conceived him*; very insufficient grounds surely for an article of Christian faith to be built

upon ; I will, however, tell the systematics where they might have found another of David's hyperboles, which would have better served their purpose than the former, without casting so gross an imputation upon his mother, who, for ought appears to the contrary, was a very good sort of woman. The passage I allude to, is in the 56th Psalm, where he says, " the ungodly are froward even from their mother's womb ; as soon as they are born they go astray and speak lies." *

In order, however, to shew, that baptism was not instituted with any view to the cleansing the disciples of Christ from the pollution of Adam's transgression, it will be

* The late George Whitfield, who was a most zealous champion of the 39 Articles, in one of his sermons, gave the best practical proof of the original corruption and depravity of our nature, that I ever remember to have heard adduced by any of the asserters of the universal contamination induced by Adams transgression. There are many of you, says he, who have children ; ask the pretty dears in the most soothing manner, to come and learn a prayer, or get a hymn by heart, and see how they will draw their legs after them, and move as slowly as if they were going to be hanged. But say to them, come, now, and let us play a game at cards, and see how they will chuckle and run to your knees, rubbing their little hands with eagerness to begin ; and can you then doubt of their being born in sin, and deserving God's wrath and damnation ?

proper to give some account of the institution itself, and of the practice of the apostles who administered it, as a rite of initiation into Christ's religion; as also to make some observations on the rite of circumcision, which it seems to have been intended to supercede: for we read of no other rite or performance, under the Antideluvian, Patriarchal, or Mo-
saic dispensations, which can be supposed to have any reference to Adam's transgression, or to have been used as a means of cleansing from its effects, for all the piacular sacrifices were made to atone for actual transgressions.

I do not know, that any tolerable reason has ever been assigned for the institution of this painful and extraordinary rite of circumcision; and yet I conceive, that a little attention to a prevailing idolatry in the East, will lead us to discover a very important purpose of its appointment,—no less than the preventing the practice of that very idolatry.

No one is ignorant that the Phallus, which was worshipped by the ancient Egyptians, and the Baal Peor, which was worshipped by the Medianites and Moabites, was the same with the Lignum, which is still the object of adoration with the Gentoos. Whether that idolatry had its origin in the Antideluvian world, we

have no means of discovering; but, that it prevailed in the time of Abraham, cannot be doubted, as we have authentic proofs of its universality in so few years after. And, indeed, wherever the sun was worshipped as the great generator of the whole vegetable creation, the apparent generator of all animals would naturally be considered as also entitled to divine honors. To destroy or prevent an idolatry arising out of the notion, that the object of it was the prime cause of the generation of the human species, and to induce men to look up to the deity as the all-sufficient cause of the continuance, as well as of the creation of mankind, no means so effectual could be devised as the enjoining the performance of a sacrificial rite to the deity upon the very object of the idolatry. Much more might be added in elucidation of this subject, but I consider it as fitter for investigation in the closets of the learned, than for popular discussion.

That the rite of circumcision, however, had no reference to any natural or spiritual purification, is evident from the circumstances under which it was performed; for no repentance was professed, nor was there any previous qualification required of the circumcised. Circumcision, therefore, seems to be a mere positive

institution, ordained for the purpose I have already stated, and, also, as the means of separating the family of Abraham and their descendants from the rest of mankind, and to be in all ages a test of their obedience to the divine command, and of their acknowledging the God of Abraham to be the sole object of their adoration. It is highly probable the Israelites had omitted it during their residence in Egypt; and, indeed, after the orders given to the midwives to destroy the male children, as it became necessary to conceal them, their circumcision could not well be performed, nor was the observance of the rite there necessary for the purpose of keeping them a separate people, as they dwelt by themselves, and, as shepherds, were held in abomination by the Egyptians. On the same account the command to observe the rite was not renewed during their forty years sojournment in the wilderness, as they mixed with no other people during that time; but when they had passed over Jordan, and came among the Canaanites, from whom they were commanded to keep themselves separate, the rite is again enjoined them, and strictly observed, and so continued to be until the pale of separation was broken down, by the coming of Christ, whose religion was

to comprehend all nations and people; and this rite, as a mark of distinction or separation, was of course abolished as inconsistent with the universality of the gospel dispensation; and such we see was the solemn determination of the council at Jerusalem, whose members were all inspired by the Holy Ghost. The baptism of repentance, which was practised by St. John, before Christ took upon him his ministry, and afterwards by the apostles, not only superceded the performance of the rite of circumcision, but the apostles made no account of its sanctity or efficacy, for we see that all those who John baptized, had already been circumcised, as were most of those who had been baptized by the apostles before the meeting of the council. But the baptism of the apostles was different from that of John, his being simply a symbol of the repentance of the person who sought to be baptized by him; but that of the apostles was not only a symbol of repentance, which was necessary to all adults, (and they baptized none other,) but an initiation into Christ's religion, as we see that such of the Ephesians as had been baptized into John's baptism of repentance, were again baptized by Paul in the name of the Lord Jesus, Acts, ch. xix. v. 3, 4, 5. But neither in the baptism of John nor of the

apostles, any more than in circumcision, is there any mention made of, or reference to, the sin of Adam, as imputed to the person circumcised or baptized, and from which he was to be purged by the performance of either of those rites; nor have I been able to find a single expression in any of the books of Moses or the prophets, or in any of the gospels of Christ, which gives the most distant intimation, or the slightest ground to imagine, that Adam's transgression had any other effect or influence on his posterity, than depriving them of a capacity for that immortal duration, to which he and they were destined when created; not, indeed, an immortal continuance either on this earth or in this body of flesh, but by a frequent change of bodily substance, and a perpetual progress, towards perfection, as I have already shewn; for, had Adam continued in the state of innocence in which he was created, and had none of his descendants ever offended, our bodies of flesh were not fitted for an immortal duration, but instead of their suffering death and mouldering to dust in the grave, as they now do, they would have been spiritualized as Enoch and Elijah's were, and as Christ was in the tomb, and exalted to a more elevated state in the

great scale of intelligent beings, when they had performed the duties and fulfilled the term appointed for them.

Considering baptism in the light of the rite of initiation only into the Christian covenant, as in like manner as circumcision was the rite of initiation into the covenant made with Abraham, it must be deemed equally fit with it to be administered to infants. There is, however, an appearance of superior sanctity in the act of baptism, to that which is discoverable in the act of circumcision ; for as the washing the body with water has always been deemed emblematic of inward purifying, it inculcates the virtuous sentiment, that whereas the water has washed away filth from the flesh, the mind should in like manner be cleansed from all spiritual impurity. Upon the whole of the investigation we have made, I think it may fairly be concluded, that the performance of neither circumcision or baptism to infants had any reference to Adam's transgression, or was intended to regenerate or absolve them from its consequences.

I might, indeed, have taken a much less compass to confute this most unscriptural and most abominable doctrine of original depravity and original reprobation, for the very strong

and unequivocal expressions and actions of Christ himself, as recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark, so clearly disavow it, that its introduction into the Christian church can only be accounted for from the insatiable ambition of priests, who, having as I have shewn in the appendix to my former publication, contrived to render the Eucharist an engine for enslaving the laity, by the invention of the transmutation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, so did they seek to make the baptism also of infants an instrument for establishing their spiritual domination; for as they had already assumed the power of forgiving sins, *they* became the only proper persons to receive the adult penitent into the church; but as infants had no actual sins to repent of, their initiation by that rite might have been thought as good when performed by a layman as a priest. To prevent a consequence so fatal to their views, they invented the horrid doctrine of original sin, transmitted by Adam to all his descendants; and the infant being thus denounced to be *born in sin*, and obnoxious to the divine wrath, his absolution became necessary at his initiation into Christ's religion, and that could only be effected by the priests, who alone claimed the power to forgive all sorts of sins.

It is recorded by St. Matthew, chap. xviii, v. 1, that when the disciples came unto Jesus, saying, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven; Jesus called a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, *verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as LITTLE CHILDREN, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven; and whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me;* and v. 10, he says, *take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father, which is in heaven.* Again, in chap. xix. v. 13, it is said, there were brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands upon them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them, but *Jesus said, suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven, and he laid his hands on them.* And Mark, besides reciting what is said in the 19th. of Matthew, with only changing the expression of kingdom of heaven, for kingdom of God, adds, that when Christ laid his hands upon the little children *he blessed them.* Now it is certain these children had not been baptized, and consequently not *regenerated*, according to the declaration of the article; for although we

should suppose them all to have been males, and circumcised, yet circumcision is not allowed to be regeneration; and, indeed, St. Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthians, excludes all efficacy from it. Circumcision, says he, is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping the commands, that is the material point. As then these children were unregenerate, if they were born in sin, obnoxious to the divine wrath, or, as the article has it, *deserving God's wrath and damnation*, it is somewhat extraordinary that Christ should manifest such tenderness towards them, and more so, that he should declare that of *such was the kingdom of heaven*, when according to our article, he ought to have spurned them from him as the enemies of God, and imps of the devil. If we look back to the old Testament for the Antideluvian and Patriarchal notion of the effects of Adam's transgression upon his posterity, we shall find, that even Eve, immediately after her transgression, was so far from apprehending that her descendants should be born in sin, and obnoxious to the divine wrath, that when she brought forth Seth, she rejoiced in having got a man from the Lord; and Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, Elizabeth, and all the holy women mentioned in

scripture, thanked God for their conception of a child as a gift from God. I have been more diligent in my examination of this doctrine, because of the impious consequences which flow from its adoption, so highly derogatory to our infinitely, beneficent creator, by representing him as producing his creature, man, the unoffending victim of his divine wrath, and bringing him into existence, subject to his own condemnation, to everlasting torments. By such representations the mind is led to dread and shrink from the creator as an avenging, an angry, and a jealous God, instead of adoring him as our most merciful father, the infinitely good and gracious being *who is loving unto every man, and whose mercy is over all his works*; while the merits of our Saviour in giving himself a ransom for us, to redeem us from death, and restore us to a capability of enjoying immortal happiness, are emblazoned and extolled as a contrast to the severe and unrelenting decrees of his father, who had condemned all the innocent and unoffending posterity of Adam, to whom he gives being to everlasting torments, for the crime of the first man he created, and from which nothing less than the voluntary sacrifice of his own only son could deliver them, as nothing less

would satisfy his stern justice; and in this strain we find the Methodist preachers continually celebrating the redeemer's love, and exciting their hearers to give to him their hearts, and to love and adore him with all the fervour of their souls, for *rescuing* them from his father's vengeance, and saving them from the fierceness of his wrath. The view I have taken of the original state of man, the condition upon which he was to have enjoyed immortality, the manner in which he forfeited all title to it, vindicates the gracious creator from all these impious imputations of harshness and severity, and injustice to the work of his hands; and at the same time, (as I shall presently shew,) takes nothing from the immensity of the obligations we are under to his beloved son, for restoring us to a capacity for a happy immortality; alleviating the conditions on which it was originally to be obtained, and by his instructions, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to perform them. It was the mere goodness of the Almighty father that incited him to give us being, and a capacity for an immortal duration; the condition of sinless obedience was necessarily annexed to it, because nothing impure or offending could be admitted into a higher state of perfection; death was therefore a necessary consequence of man's disobe-

dience, and ought not to be considered solely as a punishment. The blessed Jesus offered himself as the atonement for man's original offence, and for the future offences of each individual; and the gracious father *so loved the world that he gave his only and dearly beloved son to be a propitiation for us, that we, through him, might inherit eternal life.* To the father therefore, and to the son, be all honor, glory, and praise, for our creation and redemption.

How man became subject to death, having been already fully shewn, it is now time to enquire more particularly than has been already done, by what means he has been restored to a capacity for immortality; for we may ask with Socrates, how can sinful man make his peace with God? But although Socrates could not find a satisfactory answer to his question, he had received such information either from the Jewish Rabbies, or by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that he declares he had no doubt but that God would send, at a time when his infinite wisdom should seem fit, a man instructed by himself, who should reveal to the world that most interesting of all mysteries—how he will pardon sin.

This messenger from God, which Socrates foretold, the gospel assures us has come in the

person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal *word* and son of the father; the efficient cause and first producer of all things, who emptied himself of his glory, as the local and visible representative of the divine majesty, and took upon him our flesh, and became man; and by a life of sinless obedience to his father's will, and by a painful and ignominious death, atoned not only for Adam's transgression, and thereby restored our nature to its original capacity for an immortal duration, upon our renovation after the dissolution of our present bodies, but made atonement likewise for the failures of all Adam's descendants, who should use their best endeavours to conform their lives to the will of his heavenly father, sincerely repent of their misdoings, and humbly trust in his propitiation and intercession. Without this atonement for the failures of Adam's descendants, the restoration of our nature, to the capacity for immortality in which Adam was created, would have been of small avail to man; for as there is *none who sinneth not*, none could have claimed the immortal inheritance, and each of us would have forfeited for himself.

From this investigation of the subject, we may discover the reason why a resurrection

from the dead was not declared to the Patriarchs or Israelites, for as they must have all known themselves to be transgressors of the divine command in some particulars, and that their particular sacrifices could not so thoroughly cleanse them from sin as to render them fit objects of exaltation and reward in a future state ; until they had information of the all atoning sacrifice of Christ or the Messiah, and of the new covenant made by him on man's behalf, they must have considered a resurrection from the dead as a calamity, and supposed it could be only for the purpose of inflicting more severe and more lasting punishment for their offences in this life. Nothing, therefore, is more literally true, than that Christ brought a resurrection from the dead, and a life of immortal happiness, to light. The Patriarchs and Israelites, as well as all other people, had, indeed, a notion of existing in some way after death ; but it was either by transmigration or metamorphosis, and the former notion seems to have been the prevailing one among the Jews, and to have been entertained by the disciples themselves ; for when Christ asked them, whom men said that he was, they answered, that some said he was Elias, others John the Baptist, &c. or that some of the prophets were risen from

the dead, without observing upon the absurdity of those notions, inasmuch as they thought there was no absurdity in supposing the transmigration of some of their souls into Christ's body, which was what they meant by a resurrection from the dead. Hence we are enabled to obviate the objection to the lateness of Christ's coming, in respect to the ancient world; and to understand the manner in which those who have not yet received the gospel may be entitled to it's benefits, without leaving them, as we arrogantly express it, to the uncovenanted mercy of God; for as the general effect of Christ's atonement was the restoring the human nature to it's original capacity for immortality, by means of a resurrection, that effect may as well be imputed to those who were already dead, as to the living; as well to those who have not heard the sound of the gospel, as to those who have; and in respect to the failures of the individuals, the propitiation of Christ may be equally applied to them, as to Christians, who have equally endeavoured to do the will of God as far as they had any knowledge of it; and their want of faith in Christ cannot be imputed to them as a crime, or deprive them of his redemption. For although the Christian dispensation is in-

tended to comprehend all the nations of the earth, yet as the sound of the gospel has not yet gone out into all lands, those only to whom it has been made known are accountable for the observance of what it has superadded to or changed in former institutions. For as St. Paul justly reasons, how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard ; and there is no more ground for consigning the present indigenous inhabitants of Africa and America to the uncovenanted mercies of God, because of their not being initiated into the Christian church by baptism, than for supposing Enoch and Noah to be in the like condition, for not having performed the rite of circumcision, which was enjoined to Abraham and his family ; or that Abraham himself was without any better claim to salvation, on account of his not observing the seventh day, in the manner prescribed by the Fourth Commandment.

The wicked of all nations and ages may, however, say, we desired not to be renovated or restored to a capacity for immortality, especially as we find the condition annexed to it is everlasting punishment ; we desire therefore to remain as Adam placed us, in annihilation after this life. But it may be answered, you were

of the tower, Matt. ch. 13, v. 19, 37, he tells

originally destined to an immortal duration, which was certainly a benefit, on condition of a life of sinless obedience; Adam forfeited that immortality by breaking the condition. Christ has not only restored you to the state of Adam, but changed the condition from a perfect obedience to a sincere desire, and a hearty endeavour to obey; and even procured you pardon for failures on condition of repentance and amendment, and promises the assistance of the Holy Spirit to enable you to do so. When, therefore, the conditions are thus rendered so much more easy to be performed, there is no injustice in annexing a higher penalty to the breach of them, than the mere forfeiture of the reward of fulfilling them. But although we have no warrant from scripture for the supposition, our notions of the infinite goodness of God must lead us to conclude, that the punishment of the wicked will not be continued after the end of it is accomplished, whatever that may be; for as their punishment is not inflicted to gratify resentment or foolish malevolence, for our merciful creator *hateth nothing that he hath made*, so may we presume that neither their sufferings nor their being will be continued when their example ceases to be necessary for the great purposes of his government,

the welfare and happiness of his faithful servants.

Having thus considered the nature of the change which was wrought in the first man, by his transgression of the divine command, and the effect of that change upon his posterity, and likewise shewn how his posterity have been restored to a capacity for the forfeited immortality, upon conditions far more favourable than those upon which it was granted to Adam, through the atonement made by Christ, and the new covenant sealed with his blood, I shall now consider what information the gospel affords us of the supernatural internal influences upon our free-will, either to seduce us to act contrary to what we know to be our duty, or to assist us in the performance of it; and here it will be proper to advert to what has been already said respecting the introduction of moral evil into the world; for it is the uniform declaration of Christ and his apostles, that the same wicked being and his assistants who first introduced it, by seducing our first parents, continues to tempt their offspring, and is permitted so to do for the proof of our obedience to the divine will. We are assured that even Christ himself, when he became man, was not exempt from this trial; and in his parable of the sower, Matt. ch. 13, v. 19, 37, he tells

us, that the devil taketh away the good seed out of the hearts of men, and that he soweth tares in its place; in Luke ch. 22, v. 31, he tells Peter, that Satan had desired to have him, that he might sift him as wheat; he tells the Jewish doctors, John, ch. 8, v. 34, already quoted, that they were of their father, the devil; and in the prayer in which he taught the disciples to address the Almighty Father, he directs them to pray for deliverance from the evil *one*, (as the late learned Dr. Lort and Mr. King have proved the word ought to be translated) as the only enemy they had to dread, and the apostacy and treachery of Judas is directly ascribed to the entrance of Satan into him, after taking the sop, Luke, ch. 22, v. 3.

St. Paul tells us, Cor. ch. 12, v. 7, that there was given to him a messenger of Satan to buffet him, and that Satan had hindered him from coming to the Macedonians. He exhorteth the Ephesians, ch. 4, v. 27, not to give place to the devil, and ch. vi. v. 11, to put on the whole armour of God that they may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. He warneth the Corinthians to be watchful over their conduct, ch. vii. v. 5, that Satan tempt them not for their incontinency; and he tells them, II. Ep. ch. iv. v. 4, that the God of this world

hath blinded the minds of them which believe not. He tells the Galatians, 2, chap. v. 9, that the coming of the man of sin is after the working of Satan. He exhorts the Ephesians 4, chap. v. 7, to resist the devil, and he will flee from them.

St. Peter in the 5th, chap. of his general epistle, and 8th v. exhorts us to watchfulness, because he says, our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, and enjoins us to resist him, and St. John, chap. 3, v. 8, saith he that committeth sin is of the devil.

Having then so wily and powerful an adversary to seduce and mislead us, there is no need to suppose a depravity of nature to account for our miscarriages. But it may be asked, has our merciful and gracious creator left us to combat this adversary with our own natural powers, however undepraved they may be? No, certainly. His blessed spirit, and the myriads of his celestial ministers, are appointed to counteract the machinations of the devil, and his angels, and to guide men *into all truth*, if they make the option of following their dictates, rather than giving way to the seductions of the devil. Of this celestial assistance Christ assures us, Matthew, chap. 7, v. 7, that if we ask, it

shall be given to us, and that every one that asketh receiveth, and that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them, chap. 18, v. 20. St. John has recorded in chap. 14, v. 13 and 16, of his gospel, that Christ said, whatsoever ye shall ask in my name I will do, and I will pray the father; and he will give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the spirit of truth; and again, chap. 16, v. 13, and 23, when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my name, he will give you. The same apostle in his first general epistle chap. 3, v. 8, assures us, that for this purpose the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil; and chap. 4, v. 13, he tells, us, that God hath given us of his spirit; and in the 5th, chap. v. 18, he assures us, that he that is begotten of God, (that is, guided by his holy spirit) keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not. St. Luke has recorded, that Christ assured his disciples, chap. 2, v. 15, that he would give them a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay nor resist; and in the Acts we are told

chap. 16, v. 14, that the Lord opened the heart of Lydia; and St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, chap. 5, v. 5, asserts, that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts; chap. 7, that the spirit helpeth our infirmities; that we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father, and that he is persuaded, chap. 8, v. 38, that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers (he certainly means the evil ones) nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord; and he assure us, chap. 16, v. 20, that the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet; and in the 10th, chap. v. 13, he tells us, that God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation, make away to escape, that we may be able to bear it. And he tells the Corinthians, that when he besought the Lord to remove the messenger of Satan from him, that the Lord said to him, chap. 12, v. 9, my grace is sufficient for thee. And he assures the Galatians, chap. 4, v. 6, that God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into their hearts, and he exhorts the Ephesians, chap. 4, v. 30

not to grieve the holy spirit of God ; and he tells the Philippians, chap. 2, v. 13, that it is God which worketh in them to will and do his own good pleasure ; and he assures the Galatians, chap. 3, v. 3, that the Lord is faithful, who will establish them, and keep them from evil. St. James, in his epistle, chap. 1, v. 18, testifies that God, of his own will, begat (that is instructed us) with the word of truth, and enjoins us to resist the devil, assuring us that then he will flee from us.

St. Peter chap. 1, v. 3, 19, and 23, tells us, God has begotten us again unto a lively hope, with the precious blood of Christ, that we are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

As in all the instances I have selected, the devil is spoken of as a single being, although we are assured that he has many angels under his command, and consequently employed by him in the seduction of man ; so, although we are in like manner told of the holy spirit of God influencing and directing the hearts of men, in opposition to the seductions of the devil, we may be also assured that there are myriads of blessed angels who are sent forth to minister to those who

are heirs of salvation. And we may reasonably conclude that the holy spirit employs their agency to counteract the instigations of the evil ones ; and thus by holding out to the judgment the opposite propositions of obedience and disobedience, without influencing his will in the first instance, the freedom of the man is preserved ; but when he has made his choice, it may be presumed the party under whose influence he puts himself, then gives him support ; while the other withdraws and waits a more favourable occasion to renew his overtures. This explains the meaning of Christ's precept to resist the devil, and he will flee from you ; and of the apostles, not to quench the holy spirit, and leads us to suppose that what we call remorse of conscience, or the mental uneasiness arising from the different judgment we pass upon our actions, after they are done, from what we did before we performed them, is the operation of the spirit, whose influence we had rejected when we resolved upon the act ; and now returns to the charge when fruition has dispelled the allurements which decided our improper choice.

From this view of the moral state of man, as revealed to us by Christ, and his inspired apostles, we may clearly perceive that as this

life is intended to be a state of probation, introductory to another mode of existence, and men being free agents, and possessed of the power of volition, opposite objects are to be proposed to our choice, and for that purpose, it has been judged fit by our creator to subject us to the seductions and allurements of the author of evil, and his wicked associates; but at the same time he graciously affords us the assistance of his blessed spirit, and his celestial ministers, to counteract those enticements; and if we make the performance of his will our election, he assures us of effectual support in the performance of it; and when we shall have wholly dedicated ourselves to his service, he will furnish us with a shield to quench all the fiery darts of the devil, and in the end to tread him under our feet; and such appears to be the doctrine of the church of England, although it is seldom inculcated from the pulpit; for in the collect for St. Michael, and all angels, we pray the everlasting God, who we say has ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order, mercifully to grant *that as his holy angels always do him service in heaven, so by his appointment they may succour and defend us on earth.*

The manner in which these opposite solicitors of our will and affections operate upon us, is not revealed in scripture, nor can our closest examination of the human frame enable us to discover it. It is, however, of great importance to us, to have just notions of what means are in our own power to employ for promoting our own happiness, by inclining our will to chuse, and adhere to the choice of that which is conformable to the will of God; and we may derive much useful information respecting the operation of our minds upon our bodies, and of our bodies upon our minds, from the late publication of the most ingenious and learned Dr. Creighton, which may enable us to form a just estimate of what is in our own power to do, after we have made our election to secure our perseverance, and to entitle us to the divine assistance, which we must always bear in mind, will never be so great as to overpower our free will, and *oblige* us to act from absolute necessity. The learned doctor has most minutely traced the effect of continued or frequently repeated ideas, upon our sensation, and from thence we may fairly deduce this axiom for our government through life, that the

early inculcating and the frequent renewal of any set of ideas, will induce habits which will be easily pursued, but which will be altered with much difficulty.

END OF VOL. I.

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